COLLOQUE

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Contents

Editorial

This edition of Colloque, running slightly behind schedule, is centred a great deal on two recurring themes; China and the workings of Divine Providence in personal experience.

China is the theme of Padraig Regan's and Hugh O'Donnell's articles and is the source of the information contained in Tom Davitt's piece on Edward Ferris. Because of this, I included a piece by the late Paul Chang, who lived many years in England, and who had been a pupil of Fr Denis Nugent's in China. Though not a confrere, nor directly related to matters vincentian, it is still, I think, a touching insight into the perspective of one Chinese person.

Myles Rearden reflects on a question Tom Davitt raised in the last issue (and which the editor was keen to get Tom to expand on) and, like the other pieces, traces the workings of providence in human action, decisions and, even, apparent mistakes. More specific incidents of this are given in a short piece which *st.* Joseph Byrne DC submitted on her wartime experience in what many of us knew as Damascus House and Hugh Murnaghan's personal experience in Canada (which he submitted with great reluctance but for which the editor is very grateful!). John Concannon shares his experience and reflection on the closing of the Vincentian chaplaincy to the Deaf in Glasgow. In a time of great change, both the closing of some works and the opening of others, it is an important topic.

In the category of other members of the Vincentian family, there is the continuation of the story of Margaret Aylward and the Holy Faith Sisters and an article on Arthur Hawkins Ward, one of the founders of the Sisters of Charity in the Anglican Communion. This last group is perhaps not well known to many of us and, as Sr. Gabriel Margaret who supplied it observes, while the language is rather quaint – as it was first published some sixty years ago – it is a concise, clear and accurate account of his life and their foundation.

This is the first edition of *Colloque* for some time that has not carried at least one obituary but, just as the final version was going to print, we received word of the death of Fr Killian Kehoe, the eldest confrere in the Irish Province; solas na bhFlaitheas do. His obituary will be in a future edition.

There is quite a variety of styles of writing in these pieces and in their subject matter; I encourage you, dear Reader, to consider writing a piece which is of interest to you, whatever its style or subject matter. It can be send to Provincial Offices or to me in Chicago, or via e-mail at EoghanPFC@aol.com.

Twenty-four Hours of a Difference

Hugh Murnaghan CM

The piece-de-resistance of my four-day stay with Pat and Peggy was to be the outing to *Lake Aylan* in Algonquin National Park. Its purpose: to 'put-to-bed', before the onset of winter ice, a lake-side cabin with its pier and boats and gear all belonging to Dr Armstrong, Dr Patrick's senior-mentor-collaborator (Dr Armstrong is aging and not up to the exertion of closing up house; but Pat is pleased to help and for the chance of an excursion "into the wilds".) So when planning what would give me a thrill, they recalled that I was up there with Pat and Dr Armstrong 8 years before (to close up the cabin, etc.), and had really enjoyed it.

It is important to know, before setting out, what it is you are taking on, because once you leave your car on the lake-shore, everything else (bar the clothes you stand up in and the food you bring with you) belongs to others *and* has had many unknown users prior to your arrival! *Heed This Warning.*

From 9 to 11am all was bustle: food preparation and collection, wrapping and packing (polar explorers') clothes – the guest of honour needed to borrow everything. Peggy did all this as Pat was at the hospital since 6am! Matthew and I helped to carry hold-alls and packages down from halldoor to car in readiness for Pat's return at 11 o'clock. The only responsibility I had was to pack the Mass-kit for the first Mass in the cabin that evening. Pat, Peggy Matthew (11½) and self moved off at 11.30am, picked up Martin (a schoolfriend of Matthew), collected lake-side cabin keys from a neighbour who had care of them, and we were off. A beauty-spot at half-way provided an excuse for a half-hour break and we arrived at the lakeshore at 3 o'clock. While Pat went to unwrap the speedboat tied to the jetty, start the motor and get ready to receive our car's contents of food and clothes, we unloaded the car. (At 170 miles NW of Ottawa, on this September 28th at 3.10pm with a brisk north wind blowing in a hazy sky, 'The Fall' was not only just about tree-colours, but about temperatures and snow-flakes descending! Pleasant – seasonal – no weather to hang about – keep moving.)

Before loading began, Patrick readied the engine and pressed the self-starter: one kick was all the energy left in the exhausted (!) battery, if we had been more discerning we might have seen this as but the first of many signs of adventure lying ahead. Pat, undaunted by a petty setback, headed back up to his car, disconnected the leads from his car battery and lugged it down to the jetty, connected it up and after six or seven fits

and starts the engine fired. We were in business. Pat took Peggy aboard and off they went for a spin close inshore for about 5 minutes to test the boat's 'seaworthiness' and recharge the launch's own battery. His report: "AH systems *Go!"* It was now 3.20pm.

Having reached "the end of the road" – roads cannot access the *Best* cabins I have been informed (!) – ahead lay a mere 15-minute trip by speedboat to our "dream house in the backwoods", all being well. The fun was only beginning. I was stowed away first, up front in the "seat of honour" beside the "driver"; all other paraphernalia (including people) were stowed around me. Surprisingly, getting aboard was event-free; I did not pitch across to the opposite gunwale and topple overboard. (My stepping down from a jetty into the body of a speedboat is inelegant – "clumsy", I would say – and attempting to tuck up or away my left leg is not a facility I would boast of today. But, in all fairness, I had warned my hosts in advance and, like true explorers, they pooh-poohed my caveat!) Stowed away, I was left to admire the seamanship of the crew as they prepared the craft to take off towards our over-night residence. We headed almost due west for the opposite shore. With islands to left and right, we zoomed off, the boat floor alarmingly inclined at 30+ degrees upwards from stern to prow. Our bilge-pump was not working! The collected rain-water of the previous weeks could not be pumped out. Hoping to improve the boat's trim, Pat climbed out of the window in front of the steering wheel and lay down on the prow while Peggy steered; even 14-stone did nothing to improve our ability to see forwards – without a periscope! It is rather important to see where you are going.

No sooner was he back inside than the engine stuttered, spluttered and stopped! We began to be blown towards shallow water around an island on our port side where we were in danger of our hull being holed. Pat diagnosed the problem as "petrol starvation"! Such a 'hiccup' is unpleasant on land where there are petrol stations and walking is possible, but on cold, icy water I do not commend it! While the boys plied the oars to fend us off from hull damage, Peggy located a spare tank – fortunately full – under a seat and hooked it up. In a ten minutes, despite so many gremlins, we drew alongside our private pier at 3.45pm, knowing that all our troubles were minor and at an end. *Ha! Ha!*

Act 2 Scene 1

(You might well ask "Where is Act 1 and its Scenes?" They are over. This ain't a normal drama, so don't look for the expected.)

If you are looking forward to enjoying a holiday in a faraway cottage, belonging to another, make sure you bring a key to let you in! I'm not joking!! You guessed it – the "friend" had handed Pat the wrong bunch

of keys. My admiration for Pat (always high) was beginning to soar. He unashamedly broke in a door panel, stepped through and admitted his party via the front door. Simplicity itself. Was it Mor (or Mrs Beaton), when giving the recipe for Jugged Hare, who strongly advised: "First catch your hare?" Keep this dictum in mind – the reader will need to recall it. First the operation: Clear out cabin. Start by removing a rather large (18 foot) canoe lying from front door to back wall (it was never made clear to me if the dimensions of the cabin were such as to accommodate the canoe). First things first. With the canoe removed, the cabin swept (mice had had a romp since the previous inhabitants), surfaces dusted and wiped clean, much to-ing and fro-ing followed as the launch was unloaded and the baggage, containers, rugs, food cartons, pots and pans brought up from the jetty and unpacked. Peggy puts the kettle on the ring of the gas (Butane) range for a timely cuppa and lights the oven to cook the casserole for supper (we intend looking after ourselves rather well, living the life of a 'backwoodsman' for the next 18 hours). Meantime, the "men" outside by the lake-shore are busy: baling out water from the launch, fitting up a punt with an outboard motor for the boys to go fishing, cutting and sawing logs for the fire-grate to supplement the Butane gas heating-stove as temperatures fall below 0° C at night. Later, at dusk, it would be time for Mass.

Act 2 Scene 2

Pat arrives up the steps laden with logs. He looks over at me, standing "hopefully" beside the Butane gas stove, our 'central-heating' source for the night. I have succeeded in getting flame for the pilot-light but, when the switch to 'transfer' this light to the jets is turned on, all flames blow out. Peggy's timely cup of tea and a cookie help calm our nerves. While sipping tea, Pat lights the wood-fire using the logs he has just chopped. The fire-grate stands 18 inches from the floor; smoke is gathered by a wide cowl over the grate like a skirt inclined at 45° (intended to reflect heat out to the room) while the fumes are funnelled through the roof by a chimney-pipe. It devours logs at the rate of five per Vi-hour giving a very poor return for the wood consumed – its efficiency is *Low!* Its purpose seems to be to give a cheery welcome to the home-comer, and a place at which a person could feel warmed; it is not designed for heating a cabin!

It is now 4.30pm Sunset will be at 6.00pm. Pat and Peggy wish that the first Mass ever celebrated in the cabin will commence at 6pm, as daylight fades.

Meanwhile, Pat comes to my rescue. The Butane stove-heater continues to blow out. His surgeon's skills are called for. Step 1: He de-guts the

working parts, dismantles all the elements (each component is carefully laid out for correct replacement) on a sheet laid on the table beside the window — from which the Good Shepherd can oversee his two 12-year-old charges moving back and forwards across the lake, their outboard motor chugging blissfully. (All is well in their world, at least.) Of the world of father or mother…? He blows down all the dismantled tubes feeding the jets to free blockages, taps out accumulated rust and grime so that nothing blocks circulation; re-assembly commences. Our night-heating is assured, hopefully. I think only of 6 o'clock.

It is already 5.10pm The "patient" is about to begin breathing fire. The Butane gas knob is turned. The look of amazement froze on the surgeon's face. Even the pilot-light refused to catch fire! Poor Pat!! My heart bled for him after all the time spent on dismantling and re-assembling – to be met with failure *and* the threat of a night in a bitterly cold cabin ahead. Turning his mind to other things, his eyes focussed on the Butane gas-lamp on the wall. At least he could think of calling in our two fishermen and light the gas-mantle for their home-coming and for the celebration of Mass.

Act 2 Scene 4

Match struck, mantle perfect, gas knob turned on, but no light! You may have heard of "the last straw" – I hadn't seen it ever before quite like this! It was startling; Pat had become my *Hero,* accepting all these vicissitudes [and they were cumulative] with heroic fortitude: I would have canonized him on the spot. I had seen miracles of grace tumbling before my eyes one after another. I accompany him to the back of the cabin where there is an L-shape allowing you see the rear of the structure to the left. There stood two innocent-looking 5-foot Butane gas holders, both *Empty.* [I could understand Pat having murderous feelings against the irresponsible one who did not replace the empty one after changing over to the fresh one; this crime breaks the most basic "survival rule" of the cabin-dweller: "cover your back"!]

Act 3 Scene I

You would be naive indeed if you allowed yourself the luxury of assuming that that was that; that a plateau had been reached. Far from it! Pat went back the living-room. He had just identified the "corpse", the source of his frustration and disappointment. I followed, keeping my distance [I have learned down the years what to do when not in command of a situation – "Keep my own counsel" – "Mum's the word!"]

It was then that I was the sole privileged witness of an amazing scene.

Pat came up behind Peggy at the table where she was preparing the treats for a supper-in-the-woods after Mass. At that moment she was so like Sarah: putting all her trust in her 'Abraham'. She had no fear; her Patrick could overcome the "blips" they were experiencing up to now. He put his arms about her, and, in a whisper, broke the awesome news: *"We Have No Gas"* (I recall hearing a phrase like that somewhere!), each word – uttered gently and kindly – separated one from another by about a half-second. Peggy looked at him dumb-founded. It was a real privilege to be witness to this miracle of suspense.

"The casserole!" she cried, ran to the cooker, opened the door to find the oven and pot cold, unheated. I've never ever seen God act so decisively in two people's lives as He did just then; it was astonishing. First, Peggy was frantic, thinking of her duty as hostess-wife-mother. The sight of the log-fire with its blazing logs seemed to offer a means of cooking the casserole she was so looking forward to our sharing. When she suggested that the casserole be cooked on our open fire the idea caught Pat "on the raw". His reaction swift and hostile. To his eternal credit and, though inwardly "on-the-rack", he refrained from dubbing the idea 'hair-brained' or 'senseless'! I was rooted to the spot (without a lightning conductor in the charged atmosphere of the storm-clouds assembling about me) yet I managed to venture "Should we begin Mass before our daylight disappears?" The spell was broken; peace descended, smiles appeared. For the next half-hour a passer-by would think we had not a trouble in the world; just folk who preferred firelight to gaslight! Miracles do happen!

Act 3 Scene 2

Many inventive things were devised to make a sustaining meal that evening. It was our Mass-candles that provided light for our meal and a game of "Vanishing Bridge" afterwards. Matthew has acquired the knack of cooking excellent 'donuts' and is a wizard with a barbecue (primitive or ultramodern gas). We feasted well from his efforts while fore-going the casserole which would keep for a future event.

If I were so bold as to make a suggestion to Peggy, I'd tell her to leave that casserole dish in the middle of the family table as a reminder to Pat and herself of how closely God entered their lives on September 28th, 1991 at 5.25pm.

Jacob erected an altar at Shechem on a similar occasion. Pat and Peggy would have a real history to narrate to their children and grand-children in the days ahead. I have been privileged to witness Catholic Marriage lived at its very best, each partner accommodating the other in the frustrations of day-to-day living.

Before this story ends there is an Epilogue. Apart from cooking food there lay ahead the little question of getting through the night in as little discomfort as possible. After 9.30pm it was time to rest as there was an arduous day ahead between Sunday breakfast at 9am and departure at 11am The two boys would share the "chaise-longue" and wrap up in their sleeping-bags in front of the hearth. Pat and Peggy would share the double bed in the room off the living-room. The priest would sit up all night and stoke the fire every half-hour providing both light and heat for everyone. This was only made possible by the mountain of fire-wood that Pat felled, sawed, split and carried in between 8 and 9.30pm It is ever a mystery to me to this day how accurate was his calculation of the number of logs that would be consumed that night until 10am next morning. To my shame, Pat rose once from his bed that night to replenish the hearth while "The Stoker" slept on Watch!

Act 3 Scene 3

Although during the previous evening I had been well aware of "Summer Time", allowing us daylight until nearly 7pm, I forgot about it while sitting awake in the small hours of the morning: I got a real gunk when the horizon did not brighten shortly after 6am to provide me with "reading light" and show me the world awakening to the dawn. That was the longest hour I've ever had to wait! Surprise, surprise, none of my companions stirred until Sam! The 12-hour vigil did me a lot of good: making me an active contributor to the "expedition", not just a spectator. If nothing else had happened to me during the three weeks I spent across the Atlantic in 1991 this 24-hour excursion into the unknown I will never forget: it is eternal, and bears the divine hallmarks: explaining something of what we are about on this earth.

The enriching experience was not yet at an end. The hearth-fire was in such "good nick" that Pat made scrambled eggs in a saucepan and the additional crispy bacon supplied the desirable piquancy to the Sunday morning atmosphere of people who have rested happily. Peggy, as usual, dished up orange-juice, cereals and milk, fresh rolls, butter and preserves and tea/coffee. That's something! Before 10am "Dismantling" began. First, the speedboat had to be "beached" (and I feared that they would have to fetch a crane, or ramp, to get me aboard when the pier was dismantled!). While Pat hang precariously by one hand over the far edge, the other held a wrench to undo the bolts tying the struts that support the walkway, the 12-year-old boys and I did our best to keep pace with the "Wrecker" so that we were back from storing pieces away when the next pieces had been unhitched. By far the most difficult and hazardous part of this work was yanking from the sandy lake-floor the six vertical

aluminium stanchions embedded there last Spring. If Pat were to slip or "strain a fetlock"? It didn't bear thinking about! So I didn't think about it!! But it was a possibility…

The Wrecker expressed himself reasonably satisfied with his "hands" and their stowing away of the assemblage in the cabin. We then kept Peggy company as she packed away clothes and uneaten food (casserole included!), helped sweep the floor, carry baggage etc. to the beach and provide as many active services as possible. With the canoe restored to the living room, the broken-in door panel repaired, the "hall" door pulled out after final inspection, we descended to the beach to load the Priest – and baggage – and bid farewell. With as much weight forward and Pat heaving from astern Peggy got the boat headed "out-to-sea" while Pat clambered aboard over the stern and took over as skipper.

The clock showed 1 lam! With the trim of the craft rectified by the baling, Pat was able to show off its paces and, as a special treat, took us off on a loop run to the jetty – a real speedboat spin, exceeding the speed-limit many times over- it was exhilarating; like a champagne celebration of a weekend to be remembered for many, many reasons.

By 11.45am, we had pulled up at the jetty and began the unloading, carrying the bits and pieces to the car which was now backed down to the slip-way and the boat-cradle hooked on in readiness for the hoisting of the launch onto its cradle secured to the ball attached to the car's tow-bar. Having helped to carry up the baggage from jetty to car I sat into the car – not realizing that we would be towing the boat home! I fell asleep – the sleep of "the just"? Far from it. When I came too, I saw behind in the wing-mirror a diminished figure aboard the boat while the sound of winching reached my ears as the boat was hauled up onto the cradle that would facilitate its transport home. Imagine my embarrassment to find out, when the operation was completed, that it was Patrick who was in the boat and dear Peggy was the one who was hauling the boat up to the cradle! And I was asleep!! Do you know what shame is? That is it! I had presumed that Pat was winching and Matthew was aboard, but not so. Presumption is a sin severely reprimanded; I now know why.

There was one final shot in God's locker that morning of departure. As Pat drove up to the road from the slip-way with Dr Armstrong's boat in tow, he glanced to the right; there, beside a storage log-cabin, stood at least 50 beautiful Butane gas cylinders for sale! If we had but known. Even at this 11th hour, grace did not fail my hero. He took the sight in his stride with a mere toss of his head, without a whimper. It was now 24 hours since we had left Ottawa, and we would be back there to celebrate Sunday Mass of thanksgiving at 3pm A visit to McDonalds en route gave a very welcome half-way break.

"Thanks for the memory!"

Indigenizing our Mission to Deaf People in Scotland

John Concannon CM

As John notes, Diarmuid O'Farrell has recorded the history of the Province's involvement in, and commitment to, the ministry to the Deaf, in an earlier volume of Colloque. Here John deals with the ending of our work with the Deaf in Glasgow.

The Year of the Changes

In September 1996, I became the seventh and last cm chaplain to St. Vincent's Centre. My remit was to provide a weekly Mass for deaf people, using an interpreter to communicate. With no signing skills and little knowledge of deaf culture and ways of life, however, I was peripheral and felt marginalised. What could I or must I do? Henesy House, Manchester, and Canon Charlie Hollywood in particular came to my rescue as they have for so many new chaplains before me. Charlie taught me some basic liturgical signs and, after a week, I could sign the Eucharistic Prayer. While my competence improved during the year, my age (59) and lack of practice time means that I am still 'stuck at that beginners' stage.

In order to build some bridges with the Centre's staff and management and with the non-practicing members – the vast majority – I joined the BSL (British sign Language) Stage One signing class on Thursday evenings. Eventually, I passed the examination in July 1997. Sign language does not come easy to me, so most of the deaf congregation appreciated my efforts and my struggling perseverance over the year. Yet even the most patient of them became frustrated with my basic mistakes and, above all, with my inability to read their signed communication. We need to put this reaction in context; their anger with 'the Church', which changed both their chaplain, Noel Travers CM, and their centre director, Mary Chisolm DC, at the same time. It seems to me now that even before these changes in 1996 the quality of care/service had been deteriorating. One reflection of this was a certain indifference of the 'Centre' to the struggle of St Vincent's School for the Deaf – under threat of closure by June '97.

The Process of Indiginisation

Our Provincial, Kevin Rafferty, had informed Cardinal Winning that the Vincentians would be unable to provide a chaplain to the Deaf of Glasgow after July '97. On Ash Wednesday, 12th February, I eventually got an appointment with Cardinal Winning. I summarised the needs of the Catholic Deaf and outlined my conviction about the value of a young committed priest of the Archdiocese. Hopefully, such a person could bring much needed new life to the diminishing Catholic Deaf Community. I also stressed the urgent need of help and support for St. Vincent's School, Staff, Pupils and their parents. Danny and Maria O'Connell very movingly challenged me and all connected with St. Vincent's to a new commitment to ensure Catholic education for their son, Danny, and for all deaf children (cf. Scottish Catholic Observer, 14th February 1997). I initiated a signed petition to save the school. With 25,000 signatures and with the various submissions, especially that of Cardinal Winning, we changed the Director of Education's policy. Presently, the plan is that St. Vincent's becomes the only school for deaf children in Glasgow. It will offer a welcome and openness to children of all denominations and faiths, or of no faith at all, while retaining its Catholic ethos. This should make a significant contribution to the spiritual formation of all its pupils and the basis or opportunity for religious bonding between children of various denominations.

In the new plan, the blind children currently at St. Vincent's will be educated in a special unit attached to a mainstream school. Already the enrollment of deaf children has improved and the prospects look good. In the recent past, there was only one deaf child on the roll. The policy of mainstreaming into ordinary schooling for education, or into parishes for worship and belonging, has been shown to have limitations and, indeed, to be detrimental for some deaf children and adults. The Catholic Deaf community and its leaders have also learned the importance of ensuring that their children's' spiritual and religious needs are recorded, otherwise the educational authorities can ignore these basic human needs, not just of Catholics but of every person, young and old.

Some Memorable Highlights.

Even though the weekly Mass was always a struggle for me, the reward was experiencing the deep faith of those deaf people that I got to know during the year. Their signing of the Word of the God was often moving. Sinead McNeill's signing of Abraham's sacrifice and the Psalm; "I will walk in the presence of the Lord" was particularly moving for me. Her sudden death two days later was a deeply felt loss for all of us. Attending the Annual Catholic Deaf Association Conference in Manchester was

another significant event. It provided a springboard for a meeting of the defunct CDA (Catholic Deaf Association) in Scotland. The greatest joy of the year, however, was experiencing Cardinal Winning's new commitment to deaf folk becoming a reality in his appointment of Fr Len Purcell as a full-time chaplain. Len is already a gifted signer, having benefited from Joe Cunningham's signing classes at the Seminary in Glasgow c. 1980.

So ends our CM mission to deaf persons in Scotland for the time being. We have much to thank God for; all the fruitfulness borne by the seeds sown by Fr McNamara and his successors, ministering to deaf people. May the Healing Lord forgive if we ever failed to serve them in the spirit of St. Vincent. May the new seeds being sown by Len Purcell, the archdiocese of Glasgow and the Daughters of Charity, through Sr Barbara's pastoral work, yield an even richer harvest. Finally; two former pupils of St John's School for the Deaf, Boston Spa, Peter McDonagh and Paul Fletcher have been ordained to the priesthood. Peter is now a Salford Priest-Social Worker based at Henesy House and Paul is a Jesuit based at Loyola Retreat Centre, Painhill, Liverpool. These two deaf priests are a great gift to the deaf community in these islands, which have been richly blessed through our Vincentian Deaf Ministry since the initiatives of Frs Burke and McNamara.

Margaret Aylward and the Sisters of the Holy Faith – Part II

Eugene Curran CM

A Good and Exemplary Secular Lady

You must now become a good and exemplary secular lady – many of whom are as perfect, every bit, as nuns. Thus wrote John Curtis to Margaret on August 17, 1846, and in the same letter he wrote:

> Do not refuse to write to me again… I fear lest you may be desponding.

However, for the next five years nothing is known of Margaret, a fact that is in itself disconcerting for the historian as these were the years of the Famine. Although we know of the works and efforts of Fr Gowan in Roundwood at this period we now have no archival material, nor comments in her letters to indicate what, if any, influence these crucial years in Irish History had on her. Certainly it would seem strange if any one living in Ireland at that period could have remained untouched by so pivotal and cataclysmic event in the country's history, but Margaret never refers to it in her later letters.

She seems to have re-emerged in Dublin about 1850 with 'so much precious time on (her) hands' (3) so that it can be inferred that she was not as yet as thoroughly engrossed in her apostolate as she was later to be. Indeed, letters of this period seem to imply that she was still attempting to join a religious community and was, perhaps, something of a well-meaning 'do-gooder' (though this could be the natural distrust of conservative clerics). Her aim was to bring the Daughters of Charity to Dublin, to which effect she wrote to the Superior General of the Congregation, Père Etienne. However, for the moment that was out of the question as the Archbishop had recently spoken against it and instead she introduced the Association of the Ladies of Charity to Dublin. They had constitutions and a rule, and indeed Margaret was known as the 'Superioress', but the group itself does not seem to have been what Margaret was searching for.

However, the Ladies of Charity (with Margaret's director, Fr Curtis, S.J., presiding) met for the first time in St. Francis Xavier's, Gardiner Street, on June 6, 1851. As the work progressed Margaret became more actively engaged in it and particularly in the work of combating Proslytism. If we read between the lines of Gibbon's *Life* it would seem

that Margaret was an enthusiastic, but not always wise, 'Hammer of the Heretics'. The Evangelical Movement was then in full flood and Catholics and Protestants were at daggers drawn. Both lived in ignorance of the true beliefs of the other and so the newly converted Cornelia Connolly was able to write to her sister Ady, "I once thought all Catholic priests instruments of the Devil, if not the Devil himself, and believed all Hume's falsehoods about monastic ignorance and superstition, etc., and entertained a thousand other prejudices", and her own husband, Pierce, 'de-converted' from Catholicism, wrote pamphlets with the titles "The Pope in England and Who Shall Turn Him Out?" and "The Pro-Popery Conspiracy" (both 1853) and the Nun of Kenmare, another de-converted Catholic, was to write in 1896 the virulent *The Black Pope – a History of the Jesuits.* Margaret Aylward did not write but in her eyes the 'Soupers' were the agents of the Devil and against them she used all means to hand – including snatching orphaned children from their homes. Her means were sometimes drastic, but she was as convinced as the Evangelicals that 'that way led to perdition'.

As Bonnie G. Smith indicates in her study on the Bourgeoises of Northern France, for the women of the nineteenth century Catholicism was not merely an institutionalized form of humanism, giving one's own charitable endeavours a general expression; rather it was a cosmology. The women of the Nord often came into conflict with their own husbands, whose outlook was more secular, humanist, and anticlerical. Margaret, by her education and up-bringing, had much in common with her French contemporaries. She had been an 'assistant' to her father's good works, just as young women in the Nord assisted their mothers in the various religious charities they supported. Margaret's own outlook seems to have owed much to French influence; her desire to implement the ideals of St. Vincent de Paul in an Irish context and her founding of a Mont de Piete (an idea that originated in France). Just as for the women of the Nord coming together to pray for the conversion of their menfolk was an all-important part of their day, so for Margaret Aylward the fear of losing the souls of these children to heresy was the overriding fear.

But this was also the post-emancipation period when Catholicism was becoming increasingly powerful. One means of asserting its newfound strength was by out-stripping the Protestant churches in the numbers of conversions it obtained. And, in this respect, the orphans were a prime target. As the Protestant Churches tried to bolster their authority and respectability with quantity, the Catholic Church, with its larger congregations, tried to ensure that the truth of its teachings was vindicated by the number of people it received into the fold. For this 'season one is not surprised by the tales of verbal, and occasionally physical, confrontations between the ladies of the opposing factions. But her work was

not merely concerned with the spiritual needs of the people, she also attempted to set up a sewing-shop at 5 Upper Dorset Street, though it is noticeable that she refers to the workers as 'Hands', a term common at the time but which was scorchingly underlined as perjorative and trivializing by Charles Dickens in *Hard Times.* Her letters on their behalf to the wealthy women of Dublin still tend towards a certain condescending charity:

> "Come, see these children of sorrow, mingle your tears with theirs; listen to them whilst in patient anguish they relieve their bursting hearts; hear their tales of suffering; see the comfort which even this affords them. (5)

It was the kind of 'voyeuristic' charity which inspired the 'slumming' excursions of the upper classes in the same period. Today we are amazed or appalled by Gibbon's description of women of "independent means watching schools, pursuing the children through the winding wretched lanes and courts, and breaking through excuses, equivocations and lies of the miserable parents. (6) Miss Gibbons saw the soup and buns offered by Mrs Smyly (a Protestant Revivalist) and others as 'bribes to Bible-reading and blasphemy", (7) yet later describes, with a certain satisfaction, the breakfasts the poor received at the Holy Faith Schools. As late as 1884 Margaret wrote to Bishop Donnelly that "these children were in imminent peril of being raised in heresy" – for Margaret this was always and would continue to be her motivation and inspiration. In the same letter she sets forth for him the three ways of combating proselytism:

> 1st … it should be attacked as St. Dominick attacked heresy, viz:- by prayer and preaching, urging the people to have the Rosary said every evening… to implore the Mother of God to crush the heretical fanatics…
>
> 2nd Take the Masses into your confidence, get up a public spirit among them, inflame them with your zeal, then direct and lead them prudently.
>
> 3rd Get up a fund in each parish for those cases that cannot possibly be otherwise saved. The priest can do a great deal without money., but I warn you, my Lord, that without a fund you will come to a standstill in a few weeks and then all is lost, because to stop in this business is to give triumph to the enemy (9)

This three-pronged plan of action we see developing in Margaret when she founded the Ladies of Charity in Dublin; the necessary spiritual support without which works would fail; the stirring up of public support, and the necessary financial backing so that the project should survive and prosper. My own feeling is that while Margaret Aylward succeeded, as did Mothers Connolly and Taylor, M. A. Cusack was disappointed in her works because she neglected the first two prongs.

By her radical ideas Margaret Cusack alienated many Catholics from her cause. She did not conform to the accepted notions of a nun's role in society and thus many withdrew their support. Just as the women of Northern France would not support feminism, or non-Catholic charities, so the Catholics of Ireland shied away from someone who had roused the hostility of the bishops and was beginning to question church authority.

The true situation of the orphans of Dublin requires detailed study that is beyond the scope of this essay. Whether the situation was quite as extreme as the two conflicting denominations suggested at the time remains to be seen but whatever the statistical truth may be, Margaret felt that there was a need for a Catholic orphan society to combat the activities of Mrs Smyly and the various 'Birds Nests'. In her work we can see this gradual progression to work with the orphaned as she specialized her own activities within the general ambit of good works of the Ladies of Charity. And as the Archbishop's attitude towards the Daughters of Charity changed, so there was a renewed emphasis, on Margaret's part, on setting up a community of the Sisters in Dublin. From 1856 on she began again to address letters to the Superior General in Paris.

The aim of St. Brigid's Orphan Society, founded in 1856, was the support of the Catholic Orphan. It was not intended to run an orphanage; that work would be undertaken by the Sisters of Charity at their home in North William Street, Dublin. Again we are taken back to what Margaret saw as the most necessary criterion for the new society:

> "The Association must be as completely as possible a religious Society, and then we shall have the blessings of God upon it." (10)

By early 1857 Père Etienne was writing to her: "J'irai moi-mème vous conduire cette petite colonie des filles de S.Vincent (11)' which was in contrast to an earlier letter of 1851 where he had written congratulating her for "la perseverance que vous mettre à atteindre au but sans vous laisser disconcerter par les obstacles qui s'y opposent." (12). The earlier letter was a reply to a tentative expression of hope on Margaret's part that a community of the French Sisters could be sent to Dublin, in which Père Etienne said that the arrival of the Sisters would depend on

the speed with which: 'La maison que vous leur destiner, sera prête à les recevoir". The Superior General treated her as an equal and as the one with whom transactions were to be carried out and referred to the idea as "votre projet d'établir les filles de la Charité à Dublin.' Margaret's attitude in this correspondence is equally direct and centred on the work; her "I believe it best to be plain in doing business" (15) shows a woman caught up in the value of her work and not disconcerted by the station or sex of those with whom she had to deal. This same attitude of equality in service shows in her letter of 13th March 1851 to Fr Philip Dowley, Provincial of the Vincentians, in which she argues forcefully against him. In this ability to state, and stand by, her case she is closely akin to Cornelia Connolly, who was willing to appear in court – an action her opponent had excluded as a possibility for a nun – in order to defend her community. At the same time both Cornelia and Margaret Aylward were ready to bow to superior authority if it were likely to lead to open conflict, a quality M. A. Cusack appears to have lacked. This ability to bend when necessary but to defend if possible allowed Mothers Aylward, Connelly and Taylor a peace of mind in the face of the storm, storms that left the Nun of Kenmare embittered and frustrated.

In 1857 however, before the arrival of the Daughters in Dublin, one can see an example of a recurring tendency in Margaret. In order to facilitate the work for St Brigid's she attempted to form some of the women who worked with her into a 'lay community'. These women would live together as seculars in a house in Berkeley Road, Phisboro, but with a mitigated form of religious life to bind them together. It lasted for some short time but seems to have suffered some major setbacks. As Gibbons says: "of all the Saints assembled at No. 6, Miss Aylward herself was doubtless the most difficult to bear with", and Fr Lynch CM., writing of the problems of this early community says: "want of patience and mutual forbearance are his (the Dragon of the Apocalypse) terrible teeth of destruction"(17). By December 1858 the small community had disbanded but Margaret had gained one of her strongest supporters and first sisters of the Holy Faith, Ada Allingham (Sr M. Francis). Perhaps the difficulties in the Berkley Street community explain why Margaret later did not live in the Holy Faith Convent permanently, but moved and dressed as a secular. In Church History it is common for women to first attempt to live together as laics without perpetual vows; for example, St Francis de Sales' Visitation Sisters or the Daughters of Charity under St Louise de Marillac. This was especially true of the nineteenth century, as Dr Fancy's study shows. But for most it was a preliminary to final integration into mainstream religious life. For Margaret it seems to have been an indication that such a life, as it was then lived, was not for her. This will be dealt with in greater detail later.

Her growing sensitivity to what would be best suited to local needs at that time is shown again when the Daughters finally arrived in Ireland. Having made every effort to bring them to Ireland, Margaret soon realized that they were trying to implement the tried and tested continental systems without seeking to discover the particular needs of their news missions. The sisters had a system which had always worked before and which they had no intention of changing. Margaret, on the other hand, was gradually formulating her approach to orphans, and the two views clashed. Just as St Vincent had been adamant three hundred years earlier that his newly founded sisters would not become cloistered religious, so Margaret refused to accept the idea of an institutionalized orphanage. Though the accounts of it are now unobtainable, there was a confrontation between Margaret and the Sister Servant. Neither would yield and, by 1859, the Committee of St Brigid's was founded. Margaret would have agreed with the sentiments of Mother Taylor: The more I see of foreign institutes the more certain I am that we must found our own… we cannot expect them to enter into our wants as we do." (18)

Just as Cornelia Connolly knew in what direction she wished the Holy Child nuns to move and what form of life she wanted them to lead, and to that end was willing to face the wrath of Cardinal Wiseman and Bishop Danell of Southwark, so Margaret knew in what direction service to the Catholic orphan must move, and , although it was the fruit of her own labour, was willing to depart from any movement which opposed this. As Père Etienne had said in the letter already quoted: 'C'est là la caractère qui distingue les pensées de Dieu de celles des hommes", that is, the ability to face, acknowledge and overcome any obstacles which confront one. (19)

Having committed herself to the idea of fostering orphans and paying for their support, Margaret soon had to face her greatest obstacle. As President of St Brigid's Society she was responsible for the wellbeing of each child in the orphanage. A Writ of Habeus Corpus was served on her to present in court a young girl, Mary Matthews, whose mother, a Protestant, had come to claim her. Margaret was unable to comply as the child had been removed from the foster-home by a Mr Hefferman, who had, Miss Gibbons claims, forged Miss Aylward's signature and taken the child to the continent. However, no evidence was submitted to prove that the signature was a forgery, and given Margaret's attitude to the possibility of children being reared as Protestants, it is possible that, however unknowingly, she signed the letter herself.

Whatever the case may be, she was summoned before the courts and the most famous episode of her life began to unfold.

With such a character as Margaret, a woman in the process of realizing her identity and role, fostering a new movement in the service of orphans

and foundress of an emerging community, it is easy to envisage her, as Gibbons does, as an apostle before the Pharisees, a woman unjustly sentenced because of her religious beliefs. The gifts she received at the time, a medallion of St Peter in chains and a plaque of Christ before Pilate, seem to support this view. But the descriptions of the court case in the 'Freeman's Journal', from late 1860 through to the summer of 1861, show that such was not the case. It is true that the magistrate Leffroy was an ardent supporter of the Evangelical movement and that he showed a remarkable degree of ignorance of the Irish Penal System when he sentenced her to a 'male' prison, the Richmond Bridewell. Yet it must always be borne in mind that in the eyes of the law the trial was just and Margaret was guilty. As legal protector of the child she was answerable before the courts. Those who pleaded mitigating circumstances on her behalf, such as her health, were justified and with precedent but, essentially, Margaret was guilty. Besides, her case is not unique; at exactly the same time a similar case was being tried which involved the Earl of Wicklow's daughter and a local clergyman who had 'rescued' a young child. Indeed, for a time this case took precedence over the case of Miss Aylward. As a result of the trial Margaret was detained at Grangegorman Prison.

As has been shown, this was a period of sectarian division as each Christian denomination attempted to gain control of the general populace. In a case such as Margaret's it was impossible that people would remain level-headed in their arguments. In another court case, when Pierce Connolly demanded restitution of conjugal rights from his wife Cornelia, the courts first found in his favour. The atmosphere of the time was heavily anti-Roman, perhaps due to Cardinal Wiseman's triumphalist pastoral *From out the Flaminian Gate of Rome.* Yet although the atmosphere of the times, and public opinion, were against her, Cornelia Connolly finally won her case by a decision of the British Privy Council.

Just as Pierce was seen in Protestant England as a man wronged and thwarted from his natural claims by Rome, so in the popular consciousness Margaret Aylward became a heroine, facing cruel and unjust judges. In such an atmosphere it was impossible for anyone who claimed to be a Catholic to acknowledge the legality of her conviction.

Margaret Aylward, John Cowan and the Sisters of the Holy Faith

> My Dear Margaret,
> I think that the Prot.(sic) members of the board would consider themselves insulted by you or any of yours sending them Delaney's letter. I think too that you ought, if you could, not to mix religious questions with the debate in the Corporation…
>
> I won't go near the prison tomorrow… Strive and keep yourself very calm, put the most unbounded confidence in God.
>
> Everything done against you is an argument for us here to work... Don't waste your energies upon this little miserable battle. (21)

Thus wrote Fr John Gowan to Margaret in an undated letter written, presumably, to her while she was incarcerated in Grangegorman Prison. The writer was the man who, in 1853, had superseded Curtis as Margaret's spiritual director. What is noticeable in the letter is the openness of the affection he had for her, the mingling of practical and spiritual advice, and the shared sense of purpose. When he entered her life she was already forty-three and he thirty-six and they were to work together until her death in 1889, thirty-six years later.

To understand Margaret it is imperative to understand her relationship with John Gowan. But her correspondence with him, as with so many others, was destroyed. What does emerge from the remnant is a close bond, both temperamental and spiritual, and a very human delight in little things – later she was to describe to him the efforts of a porter to transport her to one of her convents – in a wheelbarrow!

Their relationship has more in common with the saints of the seventeenth century than those of the nineteenth; Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal, Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac and Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. Yet a study by Mary Evans O.P., "The Leadership of Nuns in Immingrant Catholicism", shows that for many pioneering sisters in the Mid-West such close relationships with priests were vital. (22) Earlier letters had begun with the formal 'My Dear Miss Aylward', just as, following her vows, he was the only one to address her as, 'My Dear M.Agatha'.

John was from County Dublin but, like Margaret, intensely Irish, and more mystical or visionary in outlook; as a child he is said to have had a vision of the Blessed Virgin and St Brigid, which led to his vocation

to the diocesan priesthood. During the famine years he had served as a curate in Roundwood and (in contrast with Margaret), this fuelled his memory for many years to come. (23)

Following the Famine, in 1849, he applied, and was granted permission, to join the Vincentians. As a Vincentian he was a noted spiritual director and preacher. In *Reminiscences of a Maynooth Professor* Walter McDonald remembers him as a man "earnest in his work" and of "first-rate ability"(24) and notes that, without his attempting to do so, many were won over to him and came to look on that "iron-grey rough, plain man" not only with esteem, but with admiration and rever-ence(25). McDonald also notes that the portrait which the Holy Faith Sisters have of Fr Gowan is "a very striking likeness" (26). This portrait projects the image of a man who is rigid and unbending, but John's own letters disprove this; in a letter to his niece, Mary, he comments that her brother John shows signs of a famous Gowan trait – brevity! He wrote that "like all the Gowans that I ever knew he was very brief "(27) – a quality that McDonald saw and praised in the uncle. He was also somewhat vague and in one letter wrote that he could not remember his nephew, Patrick. His letters to Margaret are affectionate; he even goes so far as to sign one: "Yours, xxx John Gowan CM."

Their first meeting was purely by chance, as Margaret went one day to the Vincentian Church in Phibsboro' for confession. But he seems to have come to know her very speedily and warned her constantly against haste and internal commotion. From Sunday's Well in Cork he reminded her that 'her first aim is self-sanctification, not works' (28).

His letters are always filled with sound advice – what to do with a young novice who was not settled (28) – or how to word addresses (29) – and encouragement in the spiritual life. Margaret tended to see the Christian life as accepting the Will of God in all things, but John reminded her of the joy that is inherent in such acceptance (30). In contrast to the short letters sent by Fr Curtis, Fr Gowan's to her are long and contain small snippets of information and gossip. Also, by the letters of 30 October 1885 and an undated one from about the time of her imprisonment, it seems that each knew the other's family well, so they must have visited each other's homes. Following Margaret's death John wrote to her sister and it is notable that he addresses this sister as Ellen and not 'Miss Aylward' (31). Once again the tone is informal and relaxed.

So Margaret came under the direction of John Gowan and began, it seems to me, to accept herself. Progressively in her letters one sees sparks of humour and affection. Her letters to Sr Francis, written in prison, begin 'My dear Ada' and go on in much the same vain as Fr. Gowan's letters to her; gossip, advice, both spiritual and practical and

an interest in the individual to whom she writes. This contrasts with the rather mawkishly sentimental letters of M. A. Cusack to her assistant:

> My own darling Evangelista,
> Darling Ev, we may never meet in this world,
> but I trust we shall spend a long and glorious eternity together.
> Your ever loving Mother
> M. F. Cusack (32)

(Author's Note: she uses here her name in religion – and this was written after Margaret Cusack had resigned as Mother General of the Sisters of Peace and left the Catholic Church.)

Margaret Aylward's letters show a tendency towards material advice, cut, dried and practical, but this was her nature, as it was Cornelia Connelly's; "Mother Theresa is expecting the little pillow by post which she left – you can tie it up tight in a roll and then put paper around It with ends open" – the latter had written to one of her less practical sisters. (33)

Margaret's growing calm and her caustic wit can be seen in letters written to the Matron of Grangegorman Prison. Margaret had been promised new rooms in the staff-wing of the prison and wrote:

> … I could not for one moment think of availing myself of the apartments named – they being two rooms belonging to two Matrons, who have but *one room* each wherein to rest and breathe pure air after a long day of toil and care.
>
> I have been long under the impression that various rooms were vacated and not allotted by the Board to any person at the removal of the Convict Matrons. I hoped I could have got one of these as the 2nd room allotted to me, the School Matrons was the one I thought of. Now I find that you are sleeping in this room.
>
> I would not for one moment ask you to change therefrom, but probably you would have no objection to give me the use of your own now unoccupied rather than have these good Matrons, Mrs O'Brien and Mrs Dillin dispossessed for two months from theirs.
>
> I never could feel happy in the enjoyment of anything which could cause inconvenience to another. The solitude and the enjoyment of their *single* room to each must be their chief comfort.
>
> I will frankly admit to you that I have less hesitation in asking you, if it be not inconvenient to you, to give me for so short a period the use of one of the 4 or 5 rooms now in your occupation than I

> could have in accepting theirs, believing that even with a greater power of expansion that I give you credit for or than you will willingly lay claim to – some or many of these rooms must be lying idle …34)

However, Mrs O'Carroll proved obdurate and, though very ill (she lost her hair during her imprisonment) and, by Fr Gowan's account, terrified of the dark and closed spaces, Margaret manages to reply thus:

> Dear Mrs O'Carroll,
> Your note just received surprised me – Lest you should labour under any misapprehension about the Board of Superintendence I must write in reply, as I was present at the discussion of the Board before the rooms were viewed and at the request of the Board I remained till the Members reported their opinion of the *rooms shown* to them.
>
> It would be particularly ungrateful to that Board on my part did I not make you aware that you labour under a misapprehension regarding them...
>
> ...Your letter informs me that you have four rooms, and is there not a small room off one of them which your sons occupied when they resided with you. From what you tell me I find I have *underrated* their number – I should deem myself unworthy of and ungrateful for the kindness shown me by the Members of the Board of every religious belief did I not at once make you aware that you wrong them if you think that they directed that 2 Matrons should be dispossessed from their only rooms, with knowledge that there were unoccupied rooms in the front –
>
> ... Forget my request now, and may you enjoy every happiness in the room the passing use of which (tho! declared necessary for my health) you have refused me, is the earnest & sincere wish, dear Mrs O'Carroll, of
> Yours very truly
> Margaret Aylward (35)

These letters make their point without bitterness or recrimination and mark the influence of Fr Gowan on this rather headstrong lady.

That Margaret should have been so closely united with John Gowan is, perhaps, apparently out of character. Margaret was used to treating men as equals – see her letters to Père Etienne, Cardinal Cullen and Bishop Donnelly – but she was not an affectionate woman in the general sense.

Elderly sisters, who would have known her as novices, remembered her as aloof and cold, a powerful but essentially unapproachable woman. This was undoubtably so; the few remaining letters do indicate a practical woman, intent on her work, who suffered her own limitations, and those of others, badly. It is not unusual for foundresses to have confessors or spiritual directors but the relationship was usually formal and distant, as was Margaret's earlier relationship with Curtis. Mother Taylor had been supported in the early years by Fr. Clare S.J. but when his posting was changed Fr Dignam S.J. came in to fill the breach. Though she relied on their guidance and support, Mother Magdalen was the sole founder of the Poor Servants; the priests were merely her spiritual directors.

The reason behind the closeness of the Aylward-Gowan relationship was Margaret's own recognition that she needed someone who would understand and direct her. Her mission, in her own eyes, was primarily a spiritual one, therefore she herself had to be a person of deep faith and spirituality. Margaret's own spirituality was healthy and robust but it was perhaps too robust for the times she lived in; she lacked the 'piety' that was then the accepted norm of holiness. Mothers Connolly and Taylor, converts to Catholicism during the post-Oxford Movement period, close to Wiseman and Newman, had a more conventional spirituality. Both became engrossed by the ritual and rites of Roman Catholicism, indeed we know that Cornelia Connolly had a 'weakness' for relics of obscure saints and Mother Taylor for statues. Mother Aikenhead moved through the entire pantheon of the heavenly court with ease and her letters are filled with references to various sisters' patron saints and to a multitude of devotions. Unlike the two first-named, Margaret Aylward, while accepting its presence, seems to have remained untouched by the Devotional Revolution. Of her commitment to the church there can be no doubt; her letters of appeal for contributions to St Brigid's Orphanage show this, but the manner in which her faith was expressed was not that which was prevalent at the time.

John Gowan was more closely in keeping with the devotional spirit of the times, but he was also a man who shared her vision. Therefore, he could translate, into terms which were acceptable and palatable to the general public, what Margaret knew but could not communicate. It is for that reason that Margaret left the spiritual direction of the sisters in his care; he was a tried and proven director. Indeed, it was probably better so as a comparison with Mother Connolly's spiritual conferences suggests. These she composed and delivered herself, by transcribing whole sections of spiritual writings. The result seems heavy and unwielding in comparison with Fr Gowan' s own conferences.

This allocation of duties between Margaret Aylward and John Gowan worked so well that, in later years, Fr Gowan became a permanent resident

at the convent at Glasnevin and one is not surprised to find a letter to Margaret from his superior in Phibsboro asking for news of his health, but by that time Fr Gowan had received full permission from his Superior General to dedicate his time to the Congregation of the Holy Faith.

Once again it must be noted that many of the images which remain to us of Margaret Aylward are from the oral traditions of her sisterhood. And to young novices of the late nineteenth century Fr Gowan was the real founder of the congregation, a deeply spiritual and ascetic man (as his portrait shows), a father-figure while Margaret was an occasional visitor to the convent, a strange woman in secular dress (according to Gibbons, known even in the community as Miss Aylward) who seemed only to issue orders and wield authority.

The Devotional Revolution, described by Emmet Larkin in his article of the same name, fostered the image of the archetypical nun. More than ever before she became a symbol of something ethereal, something pure and untouchable. She had no identity herself, her own obliterated by an assumed religious name, but was part of a long chain of devotion stretching back to the time of Christ. We see this even with the Daughters whose lives, under Etienne's generalate, took on a monastic aspect that was alien to their original genius. Whereas in early centuries habits were an adaptation of contemporary secular dress, unadorned and inexpensive, nineteenth century nuns garbed themselves in clothes that were deliberately anachronistic, a rejection of the values of the Industrial, Scientific, Philosophical and Religious Revolutions. In the same way, Neo-Gothic, particularly under the influence of Pugin, came to be identified as 'Church Architecture'.

As Bonnie G. Smith suggests (36), Catholicism appealed to nineteenth century middle-class women because it heightened the 'cult' of the natural and the timeless. Thus, the foundresses of that century did not adapt the contemporary dress but chose styles which were deliberately out-moded, styles in which each item was invested with symbolic significance: the veil of modesty, the girdle of chastity etc. Though many of her own sisters manifested these qualities and conformed to the devotional norms of this period, Margaret herself did not. To young nuns of the Holy Faith she was an anomaly: a mother foundress who did not conform to the accepted criteria, something to live down. As the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus refrained from any mention of Cornelia Connolly (and the unfortunate court case) so the Sisters of the Holy Faith either mythologized Margaret Aylward, accentuating those qualities they deemed acceptable among founders and suppressing the more individual and idiosyncratic, or else looking to John Gowan as founder, since he seemed to embody all that was expected of founders. In such ways do myths become more potent than reality.

But Margaret's letters show clearly that, although preoccupied with practicalities, she was a woman who cared for those who worked with her and demanded that equal attention be given to the spiritual life as to the works done. The following letter, undated but written during an absence from St Brigid's and before the foundation of the mother-house at Glasnevin, shows much of her character. In the words of Juliana Wadham, speaking of Cornelia Connelly, "If genius is attention to detail, then (she) had it in large measure." (37) As this letter indicates, it should also be remembered that throughout her life, and particularly after her term in Grangegorman Prison, Margaret battled against ill-health that was, at times, almost chronic, and frequently laid her low for days. In the face of that such care, attention and humour are quite remarkable.

My Dearest Ada,

I must write one line today – I am a great deal better thanks be to God – the quiet & the rest here has served ne very much it was worth letting me go to become so soon better…

Did I tell you that I don't think Father Gowan will be with you before the evening of Saturday for Confessions so you and all will have fine time for mending your.clothes and cleaning the house

… Receive the country people and do the best you can – Tell Mrs Ledwidge to bring in the same quantity of butter on the next Saturday also to bring in Mary Carroll with her clothes on the next Saturday, that is on Saturday week – Tell her to have her hair perfectly clean and herself also, otherwise I will be much displeased…

… You will be with the country people on Saturday but for that you were named for washing the stairs – Tell Miss Vickers that if the kitchen work will allow her time on Saturday I would be glad if she washed out the Refectory, tell her to mind the oil-cloth & not to let *any* soda nor much soap touch it… The stairs will be next time I believe for you.

I think it better for me to stay quietly till Sunday and to get well – quite quite well – Be very gay and cheerful – Did I tell you (what I know you will say is "good news") that our dear Revd. Father

has decided on changing the time for rising from 6 – to half past *five* –

… Adieu love to all – pray for me – and believe me dear Ada

Yours sincerely & affectionately

(and as a P.S.)

Those who wash the boards can have one of the sacks which are in the kitchen under their knees – or a coarse rubber which is there also'. (38)

Notes

1. Letter of Curtis S.J. to MA (HFA) 'Good Friday 1851'
2. c.f. Fr Gowan's own account in Sr M. Assisi, *Sisters of the Holy Faith Dublin,* Three Candles Limited 1967, pp 32-39
3. Letter of Dowley C.M. to MA (HFA) 15.01.1851
4. Juliana Wadham *The Case of Cornelia Connelly* London, Collins 1956
5. *Life* p.112
6. Ibid p.113
7. Ibid p.113
8. Letter of MA to Bishop Niall Donnelly (HFA) 14.01.1884
9. Ibid
10. *Life* p.129
11. Letter of Père Etienne C.M. to MA (HFA) 21.04.1857
12. Letter of Père Etienne C.M. to MA (HFA) 18.10.1851
13. Ibid
14. Letter (as 11)
15. Letter of MA to Père Etienne C.M. (EFA) 04.10.1856
16. *Life* p.207
17. Dr Lynch C.M. to MA (HFA) 30.06.1857
18. Devas S.J. *Mother Magdalen Taylor* p. 123
19. Letter of Père Etienne to MA (HFA) 21.04.1857
20. See "Freeman's Journal" for December, 1860
21. Letter of JG to MA (HFA) undated.
22. See Mary Ewans O.P. "The Leadership of Nuns in Immigrant Catholicism" in Radford Reuther and Skinner Keller (edd): *Women and Religion in America,* San Francisco, Harper & Row 1981
23. Sr M. Assisi, Pp.32 ff.
24. Walter MacDonald (Denis Gwynn ed.) *Reminiscences of a Maynooth Professor* London, Jonathan Cape, 1925
25. Ibid; p.60
26. Ibid, p.59
27. Letter of JG to Mary Gowan (HFA) 25.11.189J

28. Letter of JG to MA (HFA) 27.09.1882
29. Letter of JG to MA (HFA) Lisbon 13.03.1857
30. c.f. Gibson, *Tomorrow Began Yesterday,* Dublin, Sisters of the Holy Faith, 1982
31. Letter of JG to Ellen Aylward (HFA) 18.08.1890
32. Irene ffrench Eager, *Margaret Anne Cusack* Dublin, Arlen House, the Women's Press 1979
33. Wadham, p.248
34. Letter of MA to Mrs O'Carroll (MFA) Grangegorman o6.03. 1861
35. Letter of MA to Mrs O'Carroll (HFA) 07.03.1861
36. Bonnie G. Smith *Ladies of the Leisure Classes.* Princeton N.J., University Press, 1981 Introduction and Chapter 5
37. Wadham, p. 248
38. Letter of MA to Ada Allingham (HFA) undated, marked 'Thursday'.

Arthur Hawkins Ward
The Catholic Revival in Bristol

Reprinted from the Heroes of the Catholic Revival series

By kind permission of Sr. Gabriel Margaret SC

The Catholic Revival in the English Church began at Oxford in the year 1833, with the Rev. John Keble's famous sermon at the University Church. This was followed by the appeal made to members of the Church by means of Tracts written by gifted members of the University. The Movement thus inaugurated became the object of bitter attack, until John Henry Newman lost heart, and, together with many of his followers, retired from the conflict and sought refuge in the Church of Rome. But the work of the Holy Spirit of God was not allowed to be ultimately thwarted by temporary defeat at Oxford. And now its influence began to spread to London and the Provinces. As a conspicuous example of this, it found its opportunity in the City of Bristol, sometimes regarded as the metropolis of the West of England. The pioneer of this venture in so populous and important a centre of activity was Arthur Hawkins Ward, of whose life and work it is the purpose of this Memoir to afford some account.

Arthur Ward was born in London on December 12, 1832, a few months before the beginning of the Revival at Oxford. After some years at school at Christ's Hospital, he entered as an undergraduate at Pembroke College, Cambridge. It is supposed that during his residence at that University he came under the influence of a well-known Doctor of Divinity, to whom he owed some of his earlier convictions of the truth of the Catholic Religion. In the year 1855, after taking his Degree, he was made deacon, having obtained a title at the parish of Edwinstowe in Nottinghamshire, at that time situated in the Diocese of Lincoln, and was ordained priest the following year.

In the same diocese there was beneficed the Rev. R. H. W. Miles, Rector of Bingham, in Nottinghamshire, a member of the wealthy family of Miles of Kingsweston Park, near Bristol. Mr. Miles came to a resolution to found some Almshouses for retired seamen in that city, to which was attached the Chapel of St. Raphael. The Chaplaincy was offered to and accepted by the Rev. A. H. Ward, with the title of Warden. He thus began at twenty-six years of age a career in Bristol which continued until his death nearly half a century later. The chapel was opened on May 2, 1859, when the sermon was preached by the Ven. George A. Denison,

Archdeacon of Taunton. The preacher in the evening was the Rev. H. P. Liddon, afterwards Professor in the University of Oxford and Canon of St. Paul's, London. These two men became the intimate friends of Arthur Ward until the end of their lives. A further and most valuable friendship was the outcome of that which existed between Dr. Liddon and the Warden. This is best described in some words of Lord Halifax, written shortly after the Warden's decease. 'My acquaintance with Mr. Ward,' wrote his Lordship, 'was due, in the first instance, to my friendship with Dr. Liddon. Dr. Liddon was the intimate friend of Mr. Ward. He brought us together, and the friendship thus begun was cemented and developed by the intercourse which sprung up between us, consequent on the troubles which soon after gathered round St. Raphael's.'

St. Raphael's, Bristol

In this church, erected in the first instance for the limited purpose explained above, the gifts and powers of the Warden inevitably began to be felt, and his influence to spread to a much wider circle. Little was known of the Catholic Religion in Bristol in those days, and at the same time what must now be described as St. Raphael's church was becoming a centre both of reverent worship and clearness of teaching. People were attracted from other parts of the city, and were becoming appreciative of an opportunity now presented to them such as they had not known before.

The Warden, although never an orator, was felt to be a teacher of the first order. It was little wonder, therefore, that his influence and that of the little church gradually increased. As the years went on, the development of ceremonial which was now making advances in other parts of the country naturally found a home in St. Raphael's church. The Warden, no lover of ceremonial for its own sake, was nevertheless intensely conscious of the reverence due to Almighty God, more especially in all that concerned Eucharistic worship, as well as of the value of the appeal to the eye in order to bring home to the worshippers the reality of the truths of the Faith, of which ceremonial is at once the expression and the guard. The proper vestments for the priest, the use of altar lights and of the mixed chalice, as also of incense, all of which are sanctioned by what is known as the Ornaments Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer, in due course came into use at St. Raphael's, whilst the Sung Mass was recognized as the chief act of worship on Sunday and sung at times to the music of such great masters as Mozart, Schubert and Gounod. But this by no means represents the importance of the work at St. Raphael's. The Warden was too seriously minded a priest to suppose or teach that the Catholic Religion consisted chiefly in externals. The people who assembled at his church were quite conscious that personal religion and

conversion of heart claimed the first place in their lives. Arthur Ward added "a knowledge of casuistry and the training of individual souls to the already long list of his attainments, and as time went on he became the most accomplished director both in and beyond the neighbourhood. Meantime, Protestant hostility had come to show itself in London and elsewhere in an aggressive form, and a determined effort was made to hinder the advance of the Catholic Religion when, supported by the Prime Minister of the day, the Public Worship Regulation Act was passed in 1874 by Parliament. It was not, therefore, a matter of astonishment that the splendid work at St. Raphael's, Bristol, should become an object of attack. Long before this time, the Warden was subjected to petty persecution in the local press and elsewhere, and the Bishop of the diocese (at that time of Gloucester and Bristol) was constantly in receipt of anonymous letters directed to the same end. At length his Lordship, thus stirred by outside influence, began to move, and demanded that the ceremonial in use at the church should be abandoned. Seeing that the Warden held no incumbency, but was only a Chaplain with a licence from the Bishop, his position was especially vulnerable. However, the principles by which he was guided forbade his giving way, moreover, his people would have regarded such behaviour as apostasy. He offered, however, to reduce the ceremonial in some degree, but in vain. The result was the withdrawal of his licence, and in March, 1878, the church was closed, and so remained for fifteen years. Patiently and in dignified silence, the Warden waited for a better day, ministering meantime to the Sisterhood he had founded in the immediate neighbourhood, as well as to the hundreds of penitents who still found their way to him. But a brighter day for St. Raphael's was at hand. In the year 1893, through the intervention of an influential friend, the Bishop was led to reconsider the entire situation. At an interview with the Warden he observed that 'the Holy Ghost has had much to teach us in the Church of England during these years that are past,' and that he was now prepared to consecrate the church of St. Raphael, with a parish of its own, and with Arthur Ward as its first incumbent. The consecration took place on May 30, 1893, when the Venerable Archdeacon of Taunton, who had preached at its opening thirty-four years before, was again able to be present, and Arthur Ward was instituted as Vicar. Lord Halifax, who had become his devoted and faithful friend, was present at the luncheon which followed, and from that day forward the Bishop became the warm friend of St. Raphael's. Two years later Arthur Ward resigned the benefice into younger hands, and for the rest of his life devoted himself wholly to the care of the Community of Sisters, of whose foundation some account must now be given.

The Sisters of Charity

Arthur Ward, although still a young priest, had in the course of his ministry come into contact with Dr. Neale, founder of the Community of Sisters at East Grinstead, with William Butler, founder of a like Community at Wantage, and with Canon Carter, founder of the Community at Clewer. In the year 1863, Mr. Justice Lloyd was appointed judge in the Bristol County Court. His daughter Elizabeth had been working for some years amongst the poor in the parish of All Saints', Margaret Street, London, under the Rev. Upton Richards, through whom she and the Warden were brought together, and felt alike drawn to the establishment of a Community of women in the city of Bristol, who should find, in addition to the Religious Life, the opportunity of devoting their lives to the service of the poor. The Warden's mind would naturally gravitate towards the Church of France for a model for his plan. As a schoolboy he had spent his summer holidays with an aunt who had made her home in Auvergne. He was an accomplished French scholar, and had a particular admiration for the French Church. And a pattern for Sisters of Charity was at hand in the Community founded by St. Vincent de Paul in France in the seventeenth century, whose members may be seen to-day moving hither and thither in the French capital. Two small houses were found near St. Raphael's church, where Miss Lloyd, after some preliminary training at Wantage, was joined by a small group of women. She made her Profession and was elected in 1869 to be the first Mother of the little community. She was triennially elected for forty-eight years, when she resigned, but lived amongst her daughters until her death in 1926, at the age of ninety-one years.

In 1879 the Sisters erected their own house and chapel. As the Community increased, so the work developed and grew. In addition to assistance rendered to some of the parishes in Bristol, branch houses were opened at St. Saviour's, Leeds, at Plymouth and Plympton, at Liverpool, Clevedon, and also later at Brighton and in the Metropolis itself. In the year 1887, at the request of Bishop Smythies of Zanzibar, some Sisters were sent to work for a time in the Universities' Mission at Magila in Central Africa. Meantime, the personal life of the individual Sisters was being developed under the care of the Warden, who included in his plans the provision of a chapel in which the Blessed Sacrament was perpetually reserved, a rare privilege in those early days.

With the closing of the church, the Community had become the centre of the Warden's life. As the years went by the work had grown, and the number of Sisters, together with children under their care, increased, and it was resolved to build another House in a more suitable part of the city, in which at first the children only were housed. For this purpose an admirable site was secured at Knowle, on the outskirts of

Bristol, overlooking the city, and, until its later invasion by builders, standing, with its extensive garden, largely alone. The foundation stone of St. Agnes' House, to be erected on this site, was laid in 1890, by Lady Elton of Clevedon Court, Somerset. The architect chosen was Mr. John D. Sedding, who also designed the churches of Holy Trinity, Upper Chelsea, and of the Holy Redeemer, Clerkenwell. He was one of the Warden's closest friends. The House was a fine building, and was able to accommodate between seventy and eighty persons. It was finished in the spring of 1892, when it was opened by Lady Halifax. As time went on, the Sisters' original House was becoming increasingly disturbed by the absence of quiet caused by railway developments in the neighbourhood, and in the year 1896 it was decided to establish the Mother House at the new building at Knowle. This removal was accomplished in the year 1898. Later on, sufficient accommodation was obtained for both the Sisters and fifty children by additional buildings. Mr. Sedding died in 1891. The beautiful chapel was added in 1902, under the care of the late Mr. G. F. Bodley. The building was completed by the addition of an eastern chapel in the year 1909, as a memorial to the Warden. The name of Arthur Ward must always be remembered amongst the few who, after long years of loss, helped to recover to the English Church the Religious Life for women, by the founding of a Community of Sisters of Charity, who now number fifty Professed, in addition to the Noviciate.

During the last sixteen years of his life the Warden continued to minister to the Sisters, and almost to the end he was hearing 2,000 confessions a year, including those of persons resident in the House and of many outside.

During the year 1906 his health began to fail, and in the summer of the following year this became more apparent. In the year 1908 he only preached two or three times, and on Sunday, October 4, he said what proved to be his last Mass in the Sisters' Chapel. On the following day he had a slight stroke, but was sufficiently conscious to receive the last Sacraments. On Friday, October 23, the Eve of St. Raphael's, he passed away at the moment when the Blessing was being given at the end of the Mass for the Dying, which was being celebrated for him in the chapel. On the following Monday, after a Requiem Mass followed by the Absolutions, the Burial Office was said, and the body laid in his mother's grave in Arno's Vale Cemetery. Many of his friends were present, including several priests, notably the Rev. R. M. Benson, Founder of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cowley, himself compassed about with marked infirmity, the Rev. Father Congreve, the Vicars of All Saints', Clifton, Knowle, and Bedminster, the Vicar of St. John the Baptist, Bathwick, and others amongst his oldest friends. Thus

came to a close this remarkable life, the characteristics of which may be summed up as follows.

Characteristics of His Life

Intellectually, Arthur Ward occupied a place of no ordinary distinction. Naturally clever from the beginning, he was a man of wide reading and general knowledge of persons and things. In particular, he was possessed of a considerable knowledge of the Hebrew language, and was also an accomplished French scholar, and a theologian of the first rank. Politically he belonged to the Liberal party in its best days, along with Dr. Liddon and others of the same school, but at the same time was decidedly opposed to Socialism as it began to show itself, and certainly would have preserved the same attitude of mind had he lived to witness its later developments. He had a true love of the Arts, and of beauty both in Nature and as set forth by man. He also proved himself a clever draughtsman, and it was said that he produced a ground-plan for the House of Charity at Knowle of which Mr. John Sedding expressed his entire approval. He took immense pains with all he undertook. Private correspondence was an evidence of this, and his handwriting, which may still be seen in notes of addresses given on various occasions, chiefly to the Sisters of Charity, is a model which anyone might do well to imitate.

The Warden was most particular about the care of the children. In later years, when the Sisters had many more children under their care, he constantly paid surprise visits to their refectory at meal times. He would have them well dressed, disliking the clothing that children had to wear at many institutions. If he found a girl in the House with any part of her dress untidy, he considered, and often rightly, that she had lost her self-respect.

There are plenty of preachers in our churches, some people would consider the abundance too great, but how many are conspicuous by their power as teachers? The backwardness in the knowledge of faith and practice of the Church amongst the majority of church people is sufficient evidence of the lack of priests who are teachers of the people. Arthur Ward was a teacher of the first order. His apposite epigrams and short sayings have not died along with their author. They have been stored up and remembered by their hearers for years afterwards. Moreover, he possessed that invaluable gift (by no means always to be found in men of ability), of being able to impart to those less able than himself the knowledge he himself had acquired.

It was undoubtedly the presence of such characteristics as these that produced in Arthur Ward his value as a confessor. In this capacity he

was sought out by all classes of persons. He has been heard to state that in the little church of St. Raphael people had been known to make their confessions, from the gas-stokers of Bristol to peers of the realm. He was able to make himself understood by the simplest of the land, and yet never kept his penitents a long time, in agreeable contrast to some priests who appear to have forgotten that they are where they are to administer a sacrament rather than to preach a sermon. 'We like going to the Warden,' a working woman was heard to say, 'because he understands our case so well.' The onlooker would observe that all such 'understanding' was conveyed in a few minutes.

As a director he was sought by persons from far and near, more especially by the clergy. To Cardiff, where there are many such, he paid a regular visit, which they were careful to see should be at their expense. Those under his influence or direction will remember his insistence upon the importance of adherence to principle, as distinguished from compromise, or decisions which were made to depend upon consequences. He has been heard to say ' how difficult it is to persuade some persons that it is never wrong to do the right thing.'

Lastly must be noticed his love both for God and man, to God more especially in his devotion to the Divine Incarnation, and in particular to its extension in the Blessed Sacrament. The three saints whom he was said to love the best were St. John the Evangelist, the Apostle of love, St. Vincent de Paul, the lover of the poor, on whose method he modelled his Community, and whose spirit he so wonderfully assimilated, and St. Francis de Sales, the author of *The Devout Life.* The motto he gave to his Community was *Deus est caritas.*

An Appreciation from the Right Hon The Viscount Halifax

We are allowed to reprint the following appreciation from Lord Halifax, written by his Lordship in another connection shortly after the death of Arthur Ward.

> 'Mr. Ward was one of those, and how few there are, who not only did everything he set his hand to as well as he could, but as well as it could be done. In this he exemplified the counsels he was so fond of giving to the Sisters. Everything that he undertook was perfectly well done. It was the same in small things as in great. No one understood better than he the amenities of life, or was more competent to provide them, no one than he was more resolute in subordinating them to the contemplation and service of that "City which hath foundations," which was the subject of almost his last sermon. That vision of the Unseen, that faith of which St. Paul speaks, governed all his thoughts, his words, and his actions. It

inspired his whole life, no matter on what subject he might happen to be engaged, and made it one consistent whole. He was an artist, an architect, an accomplished man of the world, with the keenest literary perception, as well as a devoted priest, and an experienced guide of souls. There was no one whose opinion could be so absolutely trusted in regard to any difficult theological question, no one whose advice was so completely to be relied upon in any complicated question of conduct. His taste was perfect, and he possessed that particular charm, the result of a keen sense of humour, and an abiding sense of the invisible world, which sees everything in true proportion, keeps everything in its right place, and inspires and preserves that gaiety of heart which is so marked a characteristic of those whose lives are inspired by the Catholic Religion. All this he was in an eminent degree. But over and above everything else, as no one who was brought into contact with him could fail to perceive, was his entire devotion to the Person of our Lord. As he lay dying, like some soldier, unable to speak, but who could still salute his general, by a motion of his hand he would make a sign to the picture of the Crucifixion opposite the bed, testifying to what had been in life, and was now in death, his heart's devotion.

'Of Mr. Ward's intellectual and spiritual gifts, I have tried to say something. Of what he was to his friends, and indeed, to all who were brought into contact with him, there can hardly be a more eloquent witness than that, when he died, one who had long known him at once bought a piece of ground in the cemetery close by Mr. Ward's grave, that he might lie beside him. The words "Dear Master and Friend" attached to some flowers and placed upon his grave, and "For Mr. Ward," inscribed on the half-shutter put up in the little shop on the day of the funeral, are a no less eloquent witness of what he was to his servants and humbler neighbours.

'Mr. Ward remains, with all the qualities which distinguished him from others, the type of a priest such as there are few, one whose place will always seem empty to those who knew and loved him. But he leaves behind him a sense of completed work, and of benediction and peace aptly symbolized by the circumstances of his own death. He used to say that the ideal death for a priest, the death he would desire for himself, would be to be called away after saying Mass, with the concluding Blessing on his lips. That wish was not granted to him. But he died just as the concluding words of the Mass for the Dying were being said in the chapel of the Community to which he had so long and faithfully ministered. The Blessing he had so often bestowed on others was thus, like

> the good seed pressed down and running over, returned twofold into his own bosom, and he left this world upheld by the prayers of those whose spiritual welfare had been the absorbing object of his life.'

Conclusion

Great have been the advances made in the city of Bristol since the beginning of the Oxford Movement. Doubtless before Arthur Ward began his career in that city good work had been carried on by other priests on what are known as Church lines. To-day, witness to the development of centres of Catholic teaching is to be found in the famous church of All Saints', Clifton, in St. Mary's, Tyndall's Park, in St. Simon's, Bristol, the church of the Holy Nativity at Knowle, and the extensive work at Horfield. But the honour of being the first to teach and lead the way in Bristol as a successor of the great Tractarians of 100 years ago will always belong to Arthur Hawkins Ward.

All A Mistake?

Myles Rearden CM

Tom Davitt's aside, in his article on working in the archives *(Collogue 38),* to the effect that he questioned the wisdom of the Irish Vincentians joining the cm in 1840, strikes a significant chord. I believe it is a point to be pondered and given its proper place in our image of ourselves. Very little has appeared in print on the matter, with the notable exception of James H Murphy's "Planctus for the Dooleyites" in *Collogue* some years ago. But remarks are often made in conversation which touch upon it. One form in which I heard it expressed in the early years of the post-Vatican 2 constitutional renewal was that the new ideas introduced a "substantial change" into the contract of membership of the CM, to the point (it seemed to be suggested) of invalidating the contract. The idea took another form in reported remarks from continental confreres that the Irish Vincentians had never been fully integrated into the CM. What may be called a retort to that is the view sometimes heard that we had retained the original Vincentian idea of "secular priests living in community" much better than the CMs on the continent and elsewhere, who were moulded to a greater extent than we were by the centralising policies of Jean-Baptiste Etienne. In this article I would like to bring up some ideas that I think are relevant to making up our minds on the issue.

First, the importance of the matter. During a retreat, it is often necessary to reappraise one's whole vocation, before the Lord, not in a negative way but not in a naively positive way either. It could be a very important exercise for the first day or two of a retreat. Otherwise issues of personal identity, commitment and faith may be papered over like cracks in a wall. Against which, it might be argued that ambivalence regarding the wisdom of our fundamental choices is a healthy thing which expresses the human condition of risk and doubt. That may be so, though I think it depends on whether the reflection is carried out in purely human terms or in the context of theological faith, hope and charity. A "woe is me" lament which could be damaging if the one lamenting was submerged in the "me", will be life-giving if it catapults him into reliance on God alone. And that, I think, shows the importance of the point. It has enormous potential for spiritual growth.

Why?

What reasons did the confreres of the 1830s have for seeking incorporation into the CM? As far as I can remember, one of the main reasons

was to ensure continuity in the staffing of Castleknock and Phibsboro and any other works they had. A loose association of priests could not guarantee that. It was for much the same reason that the original CM progressed from its foundation as an association in 1625/26 to a society with many of the characteristics of a religious community, especially noviciate, vows and a rule, by the time St. Vincent died. Another important reason the founding fathers of the province had was the admiration expressed by some influential Irish priests for what the CMS were doing on the continent, especially for the formation and support of the clergy. It does not seem to be over-stretching things to see incorporation into the cm as part of the original founding thrust of the Irish Vincentians, without any hiatus or sense of changing direction.

Subsequent decades saw the group flourishing, first in Dublin and then in Cork so that if the objectives in joining the CM were those I have mentioned, they were fulfilled. In addition, two very significant institutions of what was now the Irish Province of the CM resulted directly from decisions taken in Paris by the Generalate. One was the foundation of the parish in Sheffield, and the other, much later, was the assuming of responsibility for All Hallows. Unless I am mistaken, these are two works the Irish confreres were reluctant to undertake, and perhaps would not have done if they had remained at the level of the old Irish Vincentians. The extension to Australia and subsequent foundation of a province there as well as participation of Ireland as a province (not just some individual confreres) in the Chinese mission, also depended to a significant extent on cm membership. In the case of China, though, the great interest in the spread of Christianity in that country on the part of Irish Catholics, and especially in Maynooth, was perhaps decisive, and opening an Australian branch would not have been out of the question for the Irish Vincentians even if they were not CMS.

Would the Irish Vincentians have been associated with the Daughters of Charity if they had not been CMS? Perhaps not. The Daughters of Charity established themselves in England from France, and the CMS themselves might have taken the same route, possibly following the Daughters of Charity by then moving westwards into Ireland. Even with the Daughters of Charity growing as they did, the CMS might have remained very small, and been mostly concerned with ministry to the Daughters, as I think is or was the case with the Austrian Province. In that case the significant, and for the Irish Vincentians very valuable, link with the Daughters of Charity might not have come into being.

So?

So it does not seem to have been a very great mistake for the Irish Vineentians to join the cm, if it was a mistake at all. I think it would

be worth asking what *kind of* mistake we are considering here. It can't be like a mistake in calculation or grammar, where right and wrong are clear-cut. It is a prudential mistake that is in question, like someone going to Ballybunion instead of Rosslare for their holiday in a wet summer. Or not going to South America as missionaries instead of West Africa in 1960. The point about that kind of mistake is that they cannot be rectified (at least beyond a certain point in time) and consequently have to be looked on as part of the ordinary course of divine providence. On the basic human level, mistakes or unwise moves have to be lived with, and perhaps worked out more fruitfully than many moves that were not mistakes. I remember hearing that a Bishop in the North of England was appointed in the not too distant past as the result of mistaken identity, and yet turned out, it is said, to be an excellent Bishop. Messy situations are opportunities: this is the whole theology of the "felix culpa" and indeed of redemption. There will always be grounds for thinking that a different decision should have been made on a practical matter. But spending too much time weighing up the retrospective pros and cons may at times tip over into failing to live life as it actually is. There is not much need to labour that point. The response to recognising mistakes like that must often be, "so what?"

Vocation

On a different level, though, the problem needs to be handled more reverently. This is the level of vocation. Suppose we take it that a vocation is a task or condition of life which a believer recognises as his God-given destiny: marriage, priesthood, consecrated life, sickness, leadership in a community or something like that. (In the case of some of those it might be better if the recognising was done by someone else.) Often, talk of vocation concerns a condition of life a person is considering for the future, but strictly speaking it refers to an existing commitment, one which has been sealed as it were by personal acceptance. In that *fait accompli* sense vocation is the arena in which a person has to work out his or her relationship to God.

In the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales, the existence of an established vocation is a matter of great theological significance, in His *Love of God* he says this about it:

> The spirit of the seducer holds us down to mere starts and keeps us content with a flowery springtime. The Spirit of God makes us consider beginnings only so as to arrive at the end, and makes us enjoy the flowers of the spring only in expectation of enjoying the fruits of summer and autumn. In the great St. Thomas' opinion (S.T.,II-II,189,10) it is not expedient to consult and deliberate long concerning an inclination to enter a good and well-regulated

> religious order. He is right. Since the religious life is counselled by Our Lord in the Gospel, what need is there for long consultation? It is sufficient to have one good discussion with a few people who are truly prudent and capable in such matters and able to help us to come to a short and solid solution of the problem. But [and this is the point] as soon as we have deliberated and resolved – in this and in every matter that concerns God's service we must be firm and unchanging; we must never let ourselves be taken in by any show whatever of a greater good. (Book 8, Ch.l 1)

In other words, those of the title of the chapter where that passage occurs, the first principle of the discernment of spirits in the Salesian tradition is perseverance in one's vocation. There are two other principles, peace and joy of heart and obedience to the Church and superiors. The internal element in discernment is held firmly in place by two objective elements.

It is easy to recognise St. Vincent's own practice of discernment in these principles: his slowness in making up his mind and his tenacity when he had made it up are renowned. The point of this in the present context is to suggest that what holds for the individual holds also for the group. And that its doing so is a matter of no small theological significance. So, while it is quite understandable to say that at one stage a vocational decision was touch and go, it does not follow that at any later stage it is reversible, or even that it was a mistake. The mistake, if any, would be in not thinking the matter through in the first place, taking advice and so on. It is not clear to me that the Irish Vincentians can be said to have made that mistake.

The point is worth dwelling on a little, because in some present-day training centres for spiritual direction, as I have very good reason to know, almost every choice in a person's life is regarded as potentially reversible, including marriage, priesthood and church membership. In that setting, to describe as unwise any earlier decision could be momentous. An aside to that effect can be let pass without comment only in the secure confines of the Salesian understanding of discernment. Unfortunately, this understanding does not receive the attention it merits in forming spiritual directors.

Static and Dynamic

The impetus to renewal in all sections of the Church after Vatican 2 took a curious turn in religious and apostolic communities. Whereas in the Church at large the impetus was largely theological, in communities it was what may be called historical/spiritual – "back to the charism of the founder". That formula has a certain ambiguity in the case of institutes

which have been incorporated into other institutes, because they have two sets of Founders to be considered. However, in our case, the tension is reduced by the fact that St. Vincent was already regarded as the patron and source of inspiration by the Irish founders, and only had to make the short step from there to being the founder as well, when they joined the CM.

All the same, St. Vincent's image had a somewhat legendary character in the last century. Access to information about him was tightly controlled. This situation was radically altered by the publication of his letters and conferences and the documents relating to is foundations in the 1920s. It has been even more radically altered by the research and analysis carried out since then, especially in connection with the tercentenary of his death. Perhaps more than anyone, Andre Dodin created a new focus on the person and achievements of Vincent, to the point where he can be considered the theologian of the new CM constitutions. Understandably, many confreres found themselves thinking that the person of "ferocious and unconditional determination to realise totally his supernatural vocation" whom Dodin writes about *[Entretiens,p.33]* is not the St. Vincent meek and mild they were brought up on. Hence the feeling that a substantial change has been smuggled into the contract. The resultant crisis has been acute, all the more so perhaps for not being fully articulated. What we thought was safely static has turned out to be unpredictably dynamic.

Perhaps the most alarming result of this unexpected dynamism is for the cm to have been catapulted into the vanguard of the Church's new thrust towards social justice. Our association, or rather root and branch involvement, with the saint who was committed more than any other to the cause of the impoverished masses made that inevitable. It is a bit like a lumbering lock forward being passed the ball fifteen tantalizing metres from the line. Still, it's his chance for a moment of glory, and no one would want to say it was a mistake for him to turn up for the match.

The spiritual potential of the Vincentian charism is staggering. Challenges do not come much greater than that of transforming society through radical commitment to the person of Christ. Coupled with the Vincentian strategy of going in the name of Christ to trend-setters and the disempowered alike, however, it seems like something that could work. Those who put us in the way of dreaming that dream when they made their decision for the CM in 1840 may have been wiser than they thought.

Edward Ferris CM (1738-1809)

Thomas Davitt CM

In *Colloque* 7, Spring 1983, I wrote an article on Edward Ferris, the Irish confrere who was superior of the seminary in Amiens and who was elected third assistant to the Superior General in 1788. After fleeing from Revolutionary France with the Superior General, Jean-Felix Cayla de la Garde, he eventually arrived in Rome, and then he returned to Ireland and was installed as dean in Maynooth in 1799; he died there in 1809.

Since writing the article I have been on the look-out for information about what contacts were maintained, in both directions, between Ferris and other confreres during his years in Maynooth. In *Colloque* 18, Autumn 1988, and 21, Spring 1990,1 gave short accounts of some references to contacts between Ferris and other confreres during the Maynooth years, which I had come across in printed sources. During 1997 I came across some references in manuscript sources.

For a very long time the CM Procure in Shanghai was an important clearing-house for correspondence between Europe and missionaries in China. Before the complete closure of China by the communist regime the archives from Shanghai were removed to Hong Kong. They were stored in the two successive apartments which the Congregation had in that colony. Fr Thomas Cawley CM did some preliminary classification of the material and later was instrumental in having everything transported to the CM General Curia in Rome.

During 1997 my last major task as archivist in the Curia was to organise the Shanghai archives into some sort of system for easy retrieval of material. I built on what Tom Cawley had done, dividing the material into CM and non-CM and, within those divisions, sorting material into separate envelopes for each correspondent and filing them in alphabetical order. It should be mentioned that the CM Procure in Shanghai handled correspondence and financial affairs for many missionary communities in China as well as dealing with purely CM affairs.

While going through the material relating to the affairs of the Missions Etrangères de Paris (MEP) I came across four letters in which there was mention of Ferris. All four were written by Denis Chaumont, who was the MEP procurator in London, to Jean-François Richenet cm in Canton, China. Combining these references with those which I gave in the earlier issues of *Colloque,* and putting them into chronological sequence, we get the following list of contacts between Ferris and the Congregation during the Maynooth years.

February 1802: Lazare-Marius Dumazel cm in Canton, to Augustin Delgorgues cm in Altona (in Denmark at that time):

> Letters from Rome give us the news… that Fr Fenaja, Visitor of the Roman province, has been appointed Assistant of the Congregation in place of Fr Ferris who cannot carry out the functions of that office, being in Ireland (1).

27 April 1802: Denis Chaumont MEP, London, to Jean-François Richenet CM, Canton:

> I have sent over to France the package for Fr Boullangier, addressing it to Fr Philippe c/o the Ladies of Charity, rue du Vieux Colombier, Paris. I have sent to Fr Ferris the package meant for him, asking him to reply without delay. His answer could arrive in time for forwarding this year (2).

3 September 1802: Jean-Joseph Ghislain CM, Peking, to Joseph-Mansuet Boullangier cm, Paris:

> (Fr Lamiot has just told me that it was not to the General he sent these items, but to Fr Ferris; he thinks you are no longer in England) (3).

10 September 1802: Jean-Joseph Ghislain CM, Peking, to Frangois-Florentin Brunei CM, Vicar General, Rome:

> Last year the English company sounded us out about whether we would agree to send subjects of that country (from our Congregation, obviously), to Peking and the provinces, giving us to understand that many advantages would come from this, as well as special protection. Given the state in which I believed France to be, and not having any knowledge of your existence, Most Honoured Father, I wrote to Fr Ferris, pointing out that in the present circumstances this idea could not fail to be of great benefit to us. Fr Clet, however, thinks we must not trust it (4).

9 January 1804: Lazare-Marius Dumazel CM, Canton, to Augustin Delgorgues cm, Altona:

> I am enclosing in the package to you a letter for Fr Ferris. I have no doubt at all that if you ask the excellent Lady Clifford to confide it to someone she knows in England our revered confrere will be sure to get it. Ask Her Ladyship to forgive the liberty I am taking in making use of her influence (5).

24 January 1805: Denis Chaumont MEP London, to Jean-François Richenet CM, Canton:

> Perhaps you addressed your letters directly to Fr Ferris. I have not received any for him (6).

1 February 1807: Chaumont to Richenet, as above:

> I do not know anything about Fr Ferris; I have no correspondence with Ireland (7).

27 March 1809: Chaumont to Richenet, as above; this letter is marked as having been received 19 September 1809:

> I am sorry to have to inform you of the death of your esteemed confrere Fr Ferris. Dr Eloy is going to replace him in Menouth College in Ireland (8).

If these letters, spread between 1802 and 1809, have survived, some doing so in China, it is not unreasonable to conclude that there must have been others which have not survived and that Ferris and the Congregation kept in touch with each other right up till his death.

What are the chances of finding any further information on Ferris? It is impossible to answer that question fully. Only a short while ago, I would not have thought it likely that I would come across a source like the MEP letters in Rome, so one can hope for further discoveries.

The following would seem to be the present state of Ferris studies. There is no further information on him, to the best of my knowledge, in the archives of the CM General Curia in Rome, nor in the archives of the CM Roman Province, nor in those of the Maison-mère in Paris. That last point, though, is not certain; new material seems to surface from time to time in that house emanating from places other than the archives. Mgr Patrick Corish told me in a letter in 1989 that there is nothing not already known in the archives in Maynooth College. Mary Purcell did a lot of research with a view to writing a biography of Edward's notorious brother Richard, but she told me that she did not discover anything about Edward beyond what we had already known (9). Present-day members of the Ferris family have been unable to supply anything new on Edward.

Notes

1. This letter is in *Memoires de la Congregation de la Mission: La Chine,* Tome II, Paris 1912. The extract quoted is on page 280. Dumazel was born in 1785 and spent all his priestly life in China where he died in 1818. Delgorgues was born in 1760 and died in Paris in 1828. Benedetto Fenaja

was bom in Rome in 1736, was one of the succession of Vicars General of the CM in the years after the French Revolution, and he died as a bishop in 1812 in Paris.

2. This letter is in the archives of the CM General Curia in Rome. Richenet was born in 1759, arrived in China in 1801, returned to France in 1815 and became an Assistant General and died in 1836. Boullangier was born in 1758 and died in Paris in 1843. For two interesting items about him see *Colloque* 5, page 34, and 6 , page 30. Fr Philippe would seem to refer to Jean-Baptiste Philippe (1752-1811) who was Director of the Daughters of Charity before the Revolution, and after their re-establishment was also involved with them. The DC mother-house was on rue du Vieux Colombier for a time.
3. This quotation is in brackets in a letter given in *Memoires de la Congregation de la Mission,* tome VIII, Paris 1866, page 89. Jean-Joseph Ghislain was born in Belgium in 1751 and spent all his priestly life in China where he died in 1812. Louis Lamiot was born in 1767, was ordained in Macao in 1791 and died there in 1831.
4. This extract is on page 95 of the volume mentioned in the previous note. It is part of a very long letter. Brunei was born in 1731 and died in Paris in 1806. He was one of the Vicars General in the post-Revolution period. François-Regis Clet is the beatified martyr.
5. This letter is in the volume mentioned in Note 1, page 304. Lady Clifford was a prominent English Catholic noblewoman "with a finger in every ecclesiastical pie". She was in Altona at this time.
6. This letter is in the archives of the CM General Curia in Rome.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.* The phonetic spelling of Maynooth in the letter is interesting. According to Healy's *Maynooth College, Its Centenary History,* Dublin 1895, Dr Eloy did not succeed Ferris. Ferris was dean 1798-1801 (p. 702), and professor of moral theology 1801-09 (p. 708). He died on 26 November 1809. François Eloy was Vicar General of an unspecified diocese in France and was professor of sacred scripture 1808-09 (p. 712) and of ecclesiastical history 1808-09 (p. 714). He resigned both posts on 5 July 1809 (pp. 712, 714).
9. Mary Purcell eventually abandoned her hope of writing a full biography of Richard Ferris, because there were many points on which she could not find adequate evidence. She therefore collected what she had already researched into a long article which was printed in the *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society,* NO 18, 1985, pp. 5-77: "Richard Ferris, 1754-1828". It was also made available as a booklet.

Reflection on the Vincentian Mission in China (1699-1999)

Hugh O'Donnell CM

Saint Vincent never left France, except perhaps for a couple of years on the coast of North Africa, but he was a missionary at heart. He sent Vincentians to Algeria, Madagascar, Ireland and Poland and showed interest in the mission to the Indies and China. Within 40 years of his death the first Vincentian missionary set foot on Chinese soil.

For Vincent, Jesus was the Missionary of the Father. For him Jesus was especially the one who went from village to village proclaiming a year of salvation from the Lord and sight, hearing, strength of limb and liberation to those who longed for these blessings. Jesus' mobility, solicitude and presence to people captured Vincent's heart and shaped his vocation – and ours. He had an immense admiration for Saint Francis Xavier and he considered us as working in the shadows of the great missionaries of other communities who went before us. Nevertheless, our call was urgent and he urged us to summon up all the passionate love for proclaiming the kingdom evident in the itinerant mission of Jesus. Vincent himself longed to go on mission to the Far East, but was unable, which he attributed to his unworthiness and sins. Father Nicolas Etienne CM, after the death of Vincent, wrote that Vincent had urged him to go to China. The dynamic image at the heart of the Vincentian missionary vocation is Jesus as the one who went about doing good, proclaiming the good news of liberation.

Yet, Vincentian presence in China, as it turned out, was dictated more by circumstances and events than by policy. It was Propaganda who sent the first Vincentian to China. He was Father Ludovico Appiani (1663-1732). Appiani was chosen by Propaganda to head the first contingent of missionaries to enter China after the edict of toleration of 1692. He was appointed vice-visitor apostolic and given the special mission of founding a seminary for native clergy either at Beijing or Canton. He immediately discovered on his arrival in Canton in 1699, however, that the prevailing climate put the establishment of a seminary out of the question. He went on to Beijing where his association with Propaganda and its condemnation of the Chinese Rites put him, one might say, on the wrong side of the controversy. As a result he spent more than 13 of his 33 years in China in prison or under house arrest. He had wandered into someone else's fight. Nevertheless, it would be important to reflect on

the fact he did not have any articulated missionary strategy similar to the articulated Jesuit strategy of inculturation and reliance on the arts and the sciences and technology in the Imperial Court. When Fr. Theodorico Pedrini came a little later, he succeeded at court because of his musical abilities even though he also opposed the Chinese Rites.

If our view of things did not deal with inculturation and the rites controversy on their own terms, nevertheless, our missionary presence, then and later, did have a clear focus. It was evangelisation and priestly formation, that is preaching the gospel to those who didn't know the good news of salvation and founding seminaries for indigenous vocations. Father Johann Mullener (1673-1742) is a wonderful example of both of these goals. He arrived in 1699 with Appiani. He was a diocesan priest who became a Vincentian en route to China. He went to Szchuan where he was made Vicar Apostolic in 1716. He set up the nucleus of a seminary in Chongjing, because he was convinced China could only be converted through a native clergy. Out of this seminary came the first two Chinese Vincentians, Father Paul Sou and Father Stephen Siu. During 43 years in China, Mullener's zeal and affability among the people became proverbial. Father Siu gained a reputation for humility and wisdom before his death in Macao in 1756 or 1757 and, with his death, the first period came to an end.

The suppression of the Jesuits in 1773 became the occasion for the next phase of our presence in China. The mission developed by the Jesuits in Beijing for over two centuries was different from all other missions in China. In addition to zeal, piety, work and good will, Father Arniot, SJ wrote, "It is necessary to have science and talent. We need to try to be agreeable to the emperor, we need to make ourselves useful to the government. It will always be on these conditions alone that he will allow us to preach the gospel here." Consequently, the Jesuits were in search of a community devoted to learning. None was to be found. Eventually the lot fell to the Vincentians, not because our charisma matched the mission, but because at the time there were many members and, it was judged, some priests suitable to the mission could be found. In fact two priest and two brothers were selected, who trained hard to add to their already significant attainments. This turned out to be a happy page in missionary collaboration. When Father Nicholas Raux (1754-1801), Father Jean Joseph Ghislain (1751-1812) and Brother Bernurd Faur arrived in 1785, the Jesuits found their requirements had been met and the two groups lived in great harmony. The letters from this period are very touching. The Jesuit, Father Bourgeois, wrote in 1788:

> "Our missionary successors are men of merit, remarkable for virtue, talent, and refinement. We live together like brothers and

> thus the Lord consoles us for the loss of our good mother, the Society, which we can never forget… Meanwhile, it is hard to say in our house whether the Lazarists live like Jesuits or the Jesuits like Lazarists".

In addition to their indispensable scholarly and scientific activities which put them in high standing with the Imperial Court, Father Raux established retreats, schools for young people, a novitiate for Chinese Vincentians and a seminary for native vocations. More men were clearly needed and some came but the days for this original and fruitful strategy were numbered. This was due both to internal and external factors. Externally, the suppression of the Jesuits by Pope Clement XIV in 1773 was followed by the suppression of the Vincentians in France during the French Revolution. Beyond this shortage of personnel, China had become more sophisticated in scientific and technological matters and was less and less in awe of Western scientific achievements. Also, sentiments against foreign religion were hardening. In 1811 the Emperor expelled from Beijing all but the three Portuguese Vincentians who were members of the Bureau of Mathematics and the French Vincentian, Father Louis-François Lamiot who was the French interpreter. The Emperor allowed those in the provinces to remain in China provided they abstained from every form of apostolate. Otherwise, they would be expelled and repatriated. When Father Lamiot later was exiled to Macao in 1820, there disappeared the last of the French missionaries entitled to reside in Beijing, and with him disappeared every hope of continuing the mission under the protection of the court.

During this second phase at the imperial court the traditional Vincentian preoccupation with training priests was never far from the Vincetitians' minds. When Father Raux, who had established a novitiate and a seminary for native vocations, died in 1801, he was succeeded by his companion, Father Jean Joseph Ghislain, whose special interests and talents were realised in his devotion to the formation of the seminarians. He foresaw in the prevailing climate and for the future that Chinese priests would be the sole support of the faith. The *Annales de La Congregation de la Mission* contain the names of twenty Chinese priests and two brothers who were formed under Father Ghislain's care, and mentions their field of ministry and their labors. Some of them took vows in the Congregation of the Mission. It is said of them that they were a great credit to their devoted spiritual father, and, some, in fact, were heroic, for example, Father Francis Chen, who was imprisoned with Father François Regis Clet. He was condemned to exile and almost certainly died as a martyr for the faith. Father Lamniot, who worked with Father Ghislain in the Beijing seminary, continued this work in

Macao after he was exiled there in 1820. The formation of the clergy would to the end be an integral part of the mission of the Vincentians in China.

In this period we find two pairs of confreres who express two different embodiments of the priestly and Vincentian vocation. The first two are Blessed François Regis Clet, who after twenty-seven years in China, was martyred on February 18, 1820 and Saint Jean Gabriel Perboyre, who, after less than five years in China, was martyred in Wuchang on September 11, 1840. Together they represented for the Vincentian family and for many others an heroic missionary zeal and a deep love for the Chinese people. The other two confreres are Fathers Joseph Han and Matthew Xue. Fr. Charbonnier has raised them up in his *Histoire des Chretiens de Chine* for they represent the wonderful, but less well-known, pastoral solicitude and fruitful ministry of the Chinese Vincentian Confreres. Fr. Han was a priest for forty-seven years. He regularly visited the dispersed Christian communities in the North of China and, in Mongolia, gathered the scattered Christians. He lived on little, feared no effort, touched the hearts of the people by his preaching and translated a book of meditations for use by lay-people. He was esteemed by Bishop Pires who made him his confessor. His confrere, Fr. Xue, presided at his funeral in the midst of a huge crowd. Fr. Xue, for his part, had the same apostolic zeal as Fr. Han and, in addition, served as the leader of the French mission for fifteen years in the absence of the French confreres. He was a priest of exceptional humility and had the confidence of all.

For the next phase of the Vincentian mission the scene shifts from Beijing and Macao to Mongolia. There are epic dimensions to this part of the story; not, perhaps, in performance but in its appeal to the imagination. It was in this period that Fr. Evariste Hue and Fr. Gabet made their famous journey through Mongolia, Tibet and China to scout out the possibilities for preaching the Gospel among the nomads. AbbéHue recorded the journey in *Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie, le Thibet et la Chine* and, because of his gift of observation and ability to tell stories, his work painted a vivid picture of this unknown world for several generations of readers.

Since China was more or less closed to evangelisation at this time, Fr. Xue, whom Laniot appointed leader of the Vincentian mission in 1820, transferred the centre of activity and also the preparatory seminary from Macao to Siwantze in Mongolia in 1835. The Chinese priests formed by Fr. Laniot accompanied him there. There they enjoyed relative freedom in their ministry and also could be in touch with the Christian communities in Northern China. There, Fr. Xue continued to train and educate seminarians. And there it was, in 1835, that the great pastor and future

bishop, Joseph Martian Mouly, established himself. He was consecrated as Vicar Apostolic of Mongolia in 1840 and eventually became Vicar Apostolic of Beijing and the North.

Mouly had qualities that suited him as pastoral leader and administrator during his long years of service. There was united in him humility and firmness, gentleness and strength, simplicity and prudence. He kept his balance during times of persecution and in times of freedom for religion. Whatever his other duties, he never gave up his tours through the Christian communities. He gave a high priority to the seminary. In 1842, he recalled his seminarians from Macao, where they had been going since 1820, so that they could have their formation among their own people, in Siwantze.

In Mouly's time, two sets of events occurred which were to shape the life of the Church for the following century or more. One was secular, one religious. The secular set of events was the breakthrough of foreign powers, beginning with the first opium war, resulting in open ports, diplomatic legations, juridical exemption, extraterritoriality, eventually further "concessions" and, most significantly, of course, for our purposes, freedom to preach the Gospel. The religious factor was the development of vicariates, each entrusted to a single foreign community or missionary organisation. It was in 1856 that the diocese of Beijing was suppressed and then made into three vacariates; Mouly being the Vicar Apostolic of Beijing and Northern Hubei and temporary administrator of Cheng Ting Fu and Southwest Hubei. From this time onward and into the next century there would be an increasing influx of missionaries, eventually from Holland, Poland, Belgium, Italy, the United States, and Ireland.

Finally, in the twentieth century, two principal themes converged that caused tension and opened to the future of the church in China, namely, the formation of indigenous clergy and the role of the French protectorate in church life,

By the beginning of the Republic in 1911, the Vincentian community had minor seminaries in most of its fourteen vicariates and also three major seminaries: the regional seminary in the vicariate of Ningbo, the Vincentian major seminary in Jiaxing, established in 1902, and the Vincentian major seminary at Zhala in Beijing, founded in 1909, which after 1920 became the regional seminary

According to statistics *(Missions Lazaristes 1936-1937)* there were 260 major seminarians throughout all 14 Vincentian vicariates, with 875 minor seminarians, while 675 priests had been ordained from Vincentian seminarians, of whom 450 had joined the Congregation of the Mission. At the time of the outbreak of hostilities with the Japanese, there were 167 Chinese Vincentians.

The other factor which played such a significant part in the history of this period was the challenge Father Vincent Lebbe presented to the Vincentian community and the leadership he gave to the cause of indigenous bishops. In the Vincentian community he was extremely controversial, less so now with the passage of time. As a prophet he was not accepted by his French confreres and some of the other Vincentian missionaries, but he was very much appreciated by the Chinese Vincentians. His influence on *Maximum lllud* in 1919 and the eventual decision to ordain six Chinese bishops will be forever to his credit in promoting a truly indigenous church in China.

Of the six bishops, Bishop Melchior Sun and Bishop Joseph Hu were Vincentians and Bishop Philip Chau was educated in a Vincentian seminary, namely at the Beitang. Bishop Hu was from a family that counted eleven generations of Catholics. His qualities and gifts seemed to be evident from his days in the seminary, to which he later returned as professor of philosophy. The local civil and business leaders found in him a man they could easily reverence. Bishop Sun was the bishop in Anguo. He received Father Lebbe into his diocese and appointed him doyen. It was while working in Bishop Sun's diocese that Fr. Lebbe founded the Little Brothers of St. John the Baptist and the Little Sisters of the Child Jesus. Bishop Sun resigned for personal reasons in 1937.

When the Chinese hierarchy was established in 1946 there were several Vincentians and Vincentian-trained bishops who became diocesan bishops in their own right. Within three years, however, Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China and the situation of the Church was profoundly altered. The foreign missionaries were accused of being enemies of the people and expelled (1949-1952). Most of the Chinese confreres remained in China, more than one hundred and fifty. Little is known of them, but the stories and vignettes that have come to us paint a picture of loyalty, fidelity, suffering, imprisonment, love of the people and attachment to their vocation. Among these was Archbishop Joseph Chow, who was ordained bishop in 1931 to serve as Vicar Apostolic in Baading and, in 1947, was made Archbishop of Nanchang in Jiangxi. He is best remembered for having refused the offer of the Communist officials to make him the head of the patriotic association; Pope, as it were. He suffered a great deal under house arrest and in prison, because of his refusal, until his death in 1972.

In 1952, a new phase of the mission opened on Taiwan with the arrival of confreres from the mainland. The period from 1952-1965 was especially marked by the establishment of over thirty parishes and thousands of baptisms, followed by an emphasis on education and works of service to the poor, especially children with polio and mental disabilities. Recently, we have a new ministry among the Aborigines

and a dozen new confreres from eight provinces have joined the China Province for the China mission. Given the restrictions on our activities on the mainland, we are discovering the value and joy of presence, relationships and communion as the keys to our missionary vocation and life.

I trust this brief reflection on the grace of the Vincentian mission in China evokes thanksgiving, pride, joy and admiration for the zeal to preach the Gospel and love for the Chinese people reflected in the lives of our confreres. It has caused me to reflect more deeply on mission in China; past and future.

Visit to The Song Tang Hospice

Padraig Regan CM

Thursday 26 November
I slept late, and had a great headache. Started some desultory work on my dissertation (using Tennyson's "Ulysses" as headings for the four sections (which, at last, I have planned); "The lights begin to twinkle on the rocks". His lines, like the story, have haunted me since boyhood; fitting headings for the story of my recent struggles.

Joseph, Pawel and I had lunch chez moi. Omelette with Polish sausages and Parmesan cheese. It was good. As arranged we left about 12.30pm for Song Tang Hospice across the city and south of the Temple of Heaven. We got there just after 2.00pm. The Hospice is large and we made out way through a long open- to-the-sky passage. On either side were further passages with small dormitories this side and that. We were seated down by a lively young woman (English name is Vicky) who spoke some English. The office reminded me of the Passage Upper Room in the old days, small and alive with activity and people. She talked to another prospective volunteer (I think). She explained that what is mainly needed for the clients is love. She spoke of China's predicament now, that each child has four grandparents to care for. Many do not care or want to care. Some bring aged people, give a false address and then disappear. The attitude of Vicky, like the atmosphere of the place, was pleasant. I liked this early experience.

We learnt some of the history from an article she showed us. Thirty years ago a young doctor from Beijing was assigned to the remote Inner Mongolia region of Wu Lan Cha Bu. Far from his family and friends, Dr. Li Wei befriended the wise and fatherly old Professor Zhang. Tragically, Professor Zhang was soon diagnosed with terminal cancer of the stomach. In the cow shed Professor Zhang called. Dr Li held his friend's hand and cared for him. When the Professor know he was near the end, he pulled Dr. Li close to him and whispered, "I don't know whether there is a heaven or hell. Where do you think I will go?" Not having the answer but seeing the fear in his friend's eyes and feeling it in his grip, Dr. Li comforted his old friend while he died. At that moment, as he looked at the peace on the dead professor's face, he made the decision to dedicate his future to providing medical care for the elderly dying. Now the Hospice, in its fourth location (shades of our Nightshelter in

London; like us Song Tang Hospice is not popular), has 130 patients, elderly people at the threshold of death. It is run on voluntary donations and help (and, like The Passage, with a paid staff). "Twenty-four hour day care is unique in China. Each patient costs 60 RMB to maintain, but we only charge 19 and many can't afford that little." (There are between 12 and 13 RMB to the pound sterling.)

Suddenly, a group of about 15 students from Qing (Q is pronounced ch) Hua, Daxue (X is pronounced sh), the top university, the Chinese Harvard – privileged youngsters, were ushered into this diminutive room. We were put sitting next the door of this small office to make space for them (I noticed the couch was of western style and very comfortable – evidently the gift of some ex-pats – and into its consoling bosom we sank). The room was very cold. I regretted not wearing long-Johns. I put on my gloves but my feet and legs froze. Dr. Li came in and greeted us vigorously. Without ceremony he began to speak. He spoke with the energy of a fiery preacher. He spoke for forty five minutes. The students were swept (not too willingly, I thought) up in this wave of words. (Pawel translated for me).

What is needed for the people here is love, he began, and not material goods. He listed, with prophetic emphasis, hands at constant work, fingers prodding the air, five principles: first the importance *of Life,* it is our primary gift shared by all. Second is *Conscience,* to live from the heart, from the inner self (not encouraged in China). Third was… I can't for the life of me (nor can Joseph) remember this third principle of Dr Li (the atmosphere, though cold, was intense; concentration was demanding). Anyway, the torrent continued unabated. Fourth is *Honesty.* Here he went on a long excursus on the lies told to the Chinese people during the Great Leap Forward (on how steel production in China in the 1950s would outstrip all combined western achievements); how pictures were shown of a Chinese bicycle, all shiny and handsome, followed by a picture of a shoddy British bike. This to show the superiority of Chinese manufacture. Rubbish! Then the lies about the volume of Chinese steel production, supposedly vastly more than that of the USA. People were to collect and smelt everything in sight. Figures were falsified by competing communities, desirous of hollow prestige. The entire thing was a vast, tragic farce. In many villages more than half the population died of starvation (even cooking pots had been sacrificed to this mad paroxysm of lies). Many of those living their last days at Song Tang are frustrated and angry at what they have seen. The Hospice allows them express this frustration and anger before they die. It is important. Dr Li told the students, "You know nothing, and your learn nothing at University." He had taught as many as 3000 students in his time. It got him or them nowhere. Teachers only tell them lies, Dr. Li opines. "Come here and

learn the truth". So many students want to become rich and to do this they leave the country. That is the lie they learn in the Universities (I noticed some students looking very uncomfortable; one of them interrupted the speech and said they had to be back by 5.00pm; by this time Dr Li had spoken for 40 breathtaking and outrageous but scintillating minutes. "Only ten more minutes", he said, and drove relentlessly on.) The fifth principle is *Love* and here he spoke of religion. In the West it is the religious people who allow people to die with a sense of hope. Religion can provide this. Nothing else can provide that hope. That is why he allows Buddhism (and right next our seat was an unusually attractive bronze Buddha statue) and Christianity ("though there are few Christians in China"; later on we did see some crosses beside one or two beds). He welcomes anyone who can do the truth. The last principle is *Freedom* which has been denied the Chinese. And this included university students; they only thought they were free. Freedom was to do what is right. But who tells people in China what is right today? No one. Certainly not the government which imprisons the people in a world of falsehood and deceit (Nor do the universities, which tell lies to their students.) It cares nothing for these weak people. It has nothing to offer to the spirit of man. And certainly nothing to offer people who are dying, nor does it encourage anyone else to offer hope or love to the dying.

I was quite shocked and exhilarated by this profound, powerful, wonderful speech. It was the most marvellous event of my three months in China. He was the first free man I heard speaking his mind. He encouraged the students to think for themselves, and not to allow others (the government or the teachers) to do their thinking for them. Some students evidently did not like the message. Here was one impressive, free, conscientious and honest man speaking with passion. A John the Baptist, with a strong vital face, in shabby anorak. I was so impressed. We do not hear a lot of that in the Church or in our community either. No passion. No anger. No honesty. No vision. I thought also of The Passage, which means so much to me. Does anyone at The Passage speak with such conviction when speaking to new volunteers (or, perish the thought, at staff interviews), or would that be considered too extreme, too ultra, too politically incorrect? I felt some shame for my own blandness and impartiality when taking visitors about that amazing, spirit-filled place in London. That Mount Tabor where God's glory is revealed.

(It did not appear true that those students had to be back at 5.00pm; we met them much later on the subway/underground; they were in no hurry then. It occurred to us that there may have been loss of face for them to hear China so described and in the presence of foreigners.) The students departed. Dr. Li remained with us and said more. Some history. Also talk about caring for the dying. "We do not have this custom in China,

it is done at home." But now families are small and under pressure. "We can learn from religious people, particularly from Christians, how to care for them. Scientists say that 6 months are needed to care for the dying. I do not agree. A child needs 9 months to be born. I believe that 9 or 10 months care are needed – 24 hours a day – for a person who is dying. This need is not recognized in China. (I recalled some of our staff meetings at The Passage – and Day Centre and Statutory Body meetings on the Government paper: "Death on the Streets: People or Paupers?" – over the past year, which Greg and I attended; and our positive decision to care for the dying and dead – the issue for us was Funerals and Services for dead clients: perhaps we only just caught up with our professed beliefs?). There is much encouragement of religious faith for the place. Dr. Li encourages prayer with those who are dying. Buddhists know something of it, Christians know more and have more hope. But few enough here are Christians. He welcomes everyone. He also welcomes those who will pray. That is enough reason to come to Song Tang Hospice (what an irony; prayer is welcome at Song Tang in atheistic China; is it equally welcome to all at The Passage?). Some reference to financial needs (was this, I wondered, a touch?). We expressed out intention to come and volunteer (although the journey is massive). As teachers on Chinese salaries we have little money.

During the above the telephone had rung in the room. Vicky called Dr Li with a slightly worried glance in our direction. Dr Li took it, listened, then he said to the caller "I have three foreign philosophers with me here" and the conversation ended. We wondered what this telephone call was about. (Us? His talk? And who was the caller?)

He took us to see some of the wards and, with the help of an interpreter I was able to talk to some of the patients. One, a nurse of 82 years, could speak English. She showed me her family photographs and told me of her life. This cultured woman radiated joy in this, her winter of life. How could she possess such joy in such a place? Four aged and dying people in one bedroom smaller than mine. Those who could speak – some stroke victims or mentally ill could not speak – welcomed us cheerfully. Dr Li, it was evident, loves the patients and is loved by them. Here is the Prophet who lives out his own prophetic message. There is something here for me. Would that we at The Passage had such passion. I examine my own conscience; am I too politically correct, am I too intimidated by a secular lobby, do I give sufficient intelligent, but passionate, attention to the spiritual welfare of the place, and to those who come and see. There is, we know, some misgiving about our "Christian ethos" Recall the July training days. But who are we catering for, the clients or for a particular political agenda? (I well recall one year ago a young mentally ill chap called, I think, Stephen, in Kevin's office. I had met him in his

distress then brought him there. To Kevin's sensitive, gentle question "who is your best friend at the church" – Stephen, terribly depressed (a cigarette nailed to his lips), said that he often goes to a church; – he answered with candor, "Jesus is my best friend". Embarrassed silence ensued. Do we selectively avoid the spirituality of our clients because it is uncomfortable for us? If that is so, perhaps Dr Li has something to teach us about care, about the dying, out of Communist China.

Reflections of a Chinese Priest in England

Rev. Paul Chang*

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Cinshan (Golden Town) is the name of my home town on the south coast of the Che-Kiang province of China. My father's house stood beside a river which was one of the main supplies of water for the rice field in the country. Rice plants cannot grow without water, consequently the nearer the river the more valuable the field. My home was surrounded by water, and I grew up with a love of the sea and rivers and this love has never left me. When I was very young I was told that I was collected from a floating basket by my mother when she was washing her laundry by the river! For a long time, I believed this. Later when I read the life of Moses I realized where they had got the story. Although my home is by the river, the hills are not far away and I would go with my sister Anne (Zou-Wan – Pink Tea Flower) to collect the tender green leaves from the tea plants growing on the hill-side, or to look for mushrooms after the rain. But the memory that will always stay with me is the day my Father took me to the top of a high hill. I stood in ecstasy gazing at the running blue water joining heaven and earth. This was my first glimpse of the sea.

I started school when I was just over six years old, at almost the same time as my brother John (Chin-Ning – True Crystal). I could not bear the thought of him going away without me, since I was as big as he. In fact people often mistook us for twins. In this nursery school we did not do very much. But, we used large quantities of ink and rice paper and water paint, writing letters and drawing. It was the custom that when a boy started school, his parents celebrated the event by sending presents of sweets to be shared among his school mates as well as a gift to the schoolmaster. As nearly every day brought a new scholar, and some days more than one, we were careful not to be absent! I did not stay very long in this school for two years later my brother John joined my elder brother Peter (Chin-mo – True Beauty) at the Parish school, two hours-distance from my home. This was a boarding school, and I was too young to be accepted. I was broken hearted, for this was the first time I had ever been separated from John. Instead I was sent to the County School in Cinshan, about 45 minutes walking distance from our house. There were no buses or cars. If you wanted to go to the town-you went by foot. I remember I was the only boy making this journey. The

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others were mostly business men or farmers going to market. Talking to them I was aware of their envy of my good fortune at being able to go to school. And they all seemed to know my Father, which at times was a disadvantage! During the harvest time, the rice fields are comparatively dry, and I discovered that if I cut across the fields, I could be home earlier. Hurrying along one day, I collided with a little girl, and pushed her into the water. Her mother was most indignant and threatened to tell my Father – which she did – with dire results! I did not like this school very much. Partly because I missed my brother John, and also because the town boys looked down on the country boys. In my case this was even more marked, as my position in class left much to be desired. I was there for two years, and then I joined my brother John at the boarding school. By this time Peter had left. First he joined my Father in his wine business and later started his own business as a travelling merchant. But bad luck seemed to follow him. Twice he was robbed (remember this was war time) and lost all his goods. He married when he was just 20 years old. Not only I, but he as well met his wife for the first time on their wedding day. A boy and a girl were born to them, but both died in infancy. Two years later his wife contracted pneumonia and died. He married for the second time and when the communists took over he was transported to Inner Mongolia. There were no children from this marriage so they adopted a little boy. It is many years since I had news of him. I spent three years with my brother John in the Parish boarding school. Since he was the elder he was always the 'big brother'. He made my bed, and cleaned my shoes, and saw that I wanted for nothing. More than once I received first prize for the best made bed, while his was not even considered worthy of notice. Later he was to go away to study for the priesthood, but because of World War II he was kept at home, and I went instead. It seems that all my life, I got what should have been his.

When I left home in 1949, he was married and had a baby girl. Later a boy was born to them. In 1952, he was put in jail by the Communists. I do not know anything more about him, my poor brother.

As a Chinese priest working in England, which is not a Mission country in its strict sense, I am indeed mysterious to many people. Before I explain the quasi-mystery, let me tell you a little about my family and my education.

As in any ancient country, Chinese parents were the match-makers of their children, and not only do they choose the husband or wife, but also decide on their occupation. My elder brother Peter was chosen to study for the priesthood, because of his intelligence, good character, and the high recommendation he received from our Parish Priest. Unfortunately though, war with Japan broke out, and he was unable to travel alone the 200 miles to the Seminary. Three years later in 1939, there was an

opportunity for him to go, but the Parish Priest thought he was then too old, it would be better if I were to go in his place. My parents were reluctant to let me go, for I was the youngest in the family.

My college life was a series of ups and downs, as the nation struggled against the Japanese invasion and went through World War II. In 1945, China was jubilant, together with her Western Allies, over the defeat of their common enemies. But before the celebrations were over, the Chinese Communists overpowered the Rationalist Government and took control of the country. China was now far from peace.

In order to continue my studies, I was sent to Genoa in Italy in January 1949. Three years later on June 29th, the Feast of SS Peter and Paul, I was ordained a priest by Cardinal Joseph Siri, the Archbishop of Genoa. After my ordination I was sent to Rome for further study. Meanwhile, hundreds and thousands of foreign missionaries were expelled from China. Chinese bishops, priests and nuns were condemned under different cloaks of political crimes, to hard labour, prison or death. Chapels and churches were either destroyed or confiscated. From the expelled missionaries, I learned some second-hand news about my family.

The house my father had built was occupied by the Communist Officers, except for a small room reserved for my Mother. My Father was taken to prison for not co-operating with the authorities and for letting me leave the country. Later, he was released and he died in 1961. May God rest his soul. Since I left home I have been unable either to send or receive any news from my parents, for fear of causing trouble to others.

My brother, Peter, was taken prisoner in 1955; his poor wife and two children have lived whatever way they could all this time. My other brother, John, was forced to move with his family to Inner Mongolia, over 1,000 miles from home. He was given a flat to live in and land to work at very high rents. His house was burnt down three years ago, and I have had no word of him since.

After completing my studies in Rome in 1955,1 went to France for two years. In the summer of 1957,1 went to the parish of St. Willibrord in Clayton for my holidays. It was very enjoyable and pleasant, so much so that I decided to go back the year after, which I did. But this time I came to stay, with an official appointment at St. Cuthbert's, Withington.

Very kindly people sometimes ask me have I been home for my holidays! Indeed I would love to go home, not only for holidays, but for ever, if I could. You see there is no mystery except God's dealing with me in His mysterious way. Before I end, I must say with all sincerity and deep gratitude, that the people of both Parishes I have been in, are wonderful, and they have made me feel really at home.

A War-time experience in St. Vincent's Orphanage and St. Vincent's Nursery Training School, Mill Hill – (Later Damascus House)

Sr. Joseph Byrne DC

During the Second World War, the chapel of St. Vincent's (later known as Langdale Chapel) was demolished by enemy action during a German air-raid. The Superior's office, which was adjacent to the chapel was also damaged.

The Sisters had just left the office and the only casualty was one sister still praying in the chapel who sustained a broken leg and various cuts and bruises which necessitated her admission to hospital.

The resident boys also escaped injury as they had just left the dining room nearby to go to the other side of the building. Yet, even if the boys had been in their dining room, they would have been sheltered by the many one-hundredweight bags of flour stacked against the wall in the kitchen next door, which all seemed a wonderful coincidence but which in retrospect we could see as the Lord's providence.

In the nursery building (later St. Anselm's and the centre for youth ministry), although the babies' cots were littered with small pieces of glass from the broken windows, not one of the babies were hurt.

The most wonderful thing of all was how the Lord looked after himself, because when stock of the damage was being taken, the tabernacle was found on top of the debris, still locked and still with the Blessed Sacrament intact.

There was much disruption to the working of the house, with no gas or electricity, but the Provincial House came to the rescue and supplied all our needs until things returned to normal again.

The good thing about this time is that it provided an opportunity for growth in community and for inter-community dependence.

The air-raid wardens who patrolled the buildings at night were Fr Sheedy, Fr Donovan and Fr B agnail who took it in turns to keep watch and to be our Guardian Angels. May their great souls rest in peace.